

EDITED BY EDWIN SEAVER

PAGEANT OF AMERICAN HUMOR



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INTRODUCTION

THERE is no single phrase or even a single concept that can comprehend all the things that make us laugh; there is no tag that can cover all the writings which, if they must be classified, might be stored in the drawer labelled "humor." We laugh in appreciation and we laugh in scorn. We laugh with love, as we follow the stumbling steps of a child learning to walk; and we laugh with hate, as we follow the frantic stumblings of a trapped enemy. Opposed to the cheering laughter that deepens our acceptance of our fellow men is the rejecting laughter of misanthropy. Examples of all of these, and of many other contradictory impulses in human laughter, are represented in the literature of humor.

The examples given should be enough to indicate the dilemmas that face the man who sets out to define humor. They should serve also to explain why his definition usually ends as an entire book. In a sense, this is true of the present anthology. If the best definition is by example, then it is the editor's hope that this book may stand as a definition of "humor"—of humor in general, and American humor in particular.

I say *a* definition, instead of *my* definition, because this is not a personal selection. A very good personal selection, Mr. E. B. White's *Subtreasury of American Humor*, already exists, which I would not presume to try to better. In my selections I have sought, and have received, the collaboration of several hundred writers. In some cases I have set aside my own preference and deferred to their collective judgment. Therefore if any reader wishes to hold someone to account for a selection with which he

happens to disagree, I shall have to refer him to a whole group of writers.

The principles, then, on which the selections in this anthology have been made are the following: The chosen piece must be good writing in the opinion of a representative number of American authors; and it must be good writing that has made and still can make people laugh.

To this principle which, of course, underlies any anthology of humor, I have added another. I have sought to make the anthology serve, in the selection and the arrangement, the added purpose of reflecting the development of our national life, through the course of its literature. In this sense the present anthology is a historical one. It will fulfill my whole purpose if, through the selections in the following pages, the reader has not only been amused but has gained an insight into American life from colonial times to "only yesterday."

II

The last phrase, "only yesterday," may be remembered by some of my readers as the title of one of the top "best sellers" of the year 1932. Written by Frederick Lewis Allen, editor of *Harper's Magazine*, it made its astonishing success by revealing, among other things, how strange and remote the "sensation" or "issue" of one year can become a year or two later; how soon an idol can be forgotten, and a "rage" can be reduced to a whisper.

It is this that makes special problems for the compiler of a historical anthology. If he puts history first, then humor and literature are bound to suffer. For the humor that follows the times, that serves as running commentary on history, is a quick prey to obsolescence. The political crisis flattens out upon the receding horizon; the new developments become old, and the great controversies lose their point.

The squibs with which the humorists of their time greeted such new things as the steamboat, the locomotive, the electric light, the phonograph, the camera, the automobile, the subway, and so on, can serve to illustrate history. But the humor has gone out of them. For the humor depended on their novelty; and now they are familiar things. If one could perform a feat of

historical translation, and somehow transmute the old in terms of the new, the first impressions of the steamboat and the railroad in terms of the first impressions of radar and atomic energy, then their point and humor might be restored.

Similarly the old controversies and issues that once inspired the jokesmiths—hard money versus paper money, abolitionism, the tariff, women's suffrage, mental telepathy, prohibition and others, have retained little, if any, significance. For the vast but now mostly incomprehensible humor about them to recover its point, it would require an overwhelming burden of explanatory notes.

Then there are the past "fads" and frenzies. In their day the humor they provoked scintillated. Today it retains no gleam whatever. It is like the pebble that was so bright on the wet sands and is so dull and colorless in the city parlor.

In the boom years, for example, there were many ordinary people who made pathetic tries for fame and fortune by attempts at fantastic records. Some tried to outsit each other on top of flagpoles. Some tried to outlast one another in dance "marathons," marked by the creeping and collapse of the exhausted contestants. Today they seem pathetic rather than funny. Today we see the ambulance at the dancehall doors, not the gaily dressed couples. And the theme seems more suitable to psychiatry than humor.

Humor, more than any other form of literary commentary, attaches itself to the ephemera of history. To that extent most humor condemns itself to perhaps a merry but certainly a brief life. But there has always been enough humorous writing that, in expressing its time, expresses all time; that has so dealt with the ephemera as to reveal the eternal. Out of such commentaries on the passing show, but still more out of humorous writing that never consciously sought to be timely but in its own sure way fully contained its time, this collection has been made.

III

My readers may ask, is there a characteristically American humor? The mere existence of this volume is, of course, an affirmative answer. But if I were asked to define its characteristics

I would be in difficulties. Yet the characteristics are there and are so tangible that if one were given selections from the work of unidentified humorists, of several nations, he would have little trouble in picking out the Americans.

There is good reason for this to be so, for the life that American humor reflects is different from that of other peoples. We Americans have a heritage of democratic freedoms longer and less diluted than other peoples; our continental expanse and our possession of more than half of the world's motor vehicles gives us a special spaciousness and mobility; and our comparative material abundance makes our living more varied, adventurous and rich. These are our advantages; and one consequence is that our laughter is more genial and our satire more tolerant, on the whole, than that of peoples living in more cramped and poorer countries. But we have disadvantages as well; we are still a comparatively raw land, our traditions are comparatively adolescent, and our culture, including our humor, is comparatively coarse.

But if American humor is distinctive, it reflects several Americas, not one. There is, after all, not one America, even geographically. The humor of rural America differs from that of urban America; of the mid-continent from the seaboard; of the North from the South; and, socially, the humor of men in overalls from the men in white collars.

These differences, it is true, are weakening as the spread of education and the space-devouring developments of modern life continue, remorselessly, making every place and class uniform. But time cannot be levelled off in the same way. And the major changes in American life, over its history, are directly reflected in its humor.

The colonial American, settling the Atlantic seaboard, was different from the revolutionary American establishing a new nation. Jefferson sought to perpetuate a society of small farmers only to be forced, in his old age, to acknowledge it to be a Utopia in the face of the different America that was taking shape. The industrial America after the Civil War was an age apart from the preceding agricultural and mercantile America; but it was also an equal age apart from the belt-line industrial America of today. American history has seen us transformed from country dwellers to city dwellers, from defensive isolation to

world consciousness, and from a Puritan to an almost Bohemian morality.

And whether we think this is or is not as it should be, we cannot hope to stop it, or alter it. We cannot go back to any romanticized past; and if we could we would probably take the first time-train back. Only harm has been caused by the futile efforts to force people to return to the past, as the history of our own time has so drastically demonstrated. History has no sadder caricature than Mussolini trying to make over the Italian people into Imperial Romans; and Hitler's new "Vikings" were reduced to an animal level unfit for nationhood at all.

So we can take it as a historical law that people are in a state of continuous transformation, and, as a literary law, that their humor will reflect this. We may even predict that while there are still enough differences between America and the rest of the world for its humor to have a national flavor, this will not necessarily be the case forever. We are rapidly fusing into one world. The atom bomb has made it clear that there will be "one world or none," and our humor too reflects, with pauses and recessions, the evolution toward one world.

IV

How to be a historical anthology without the history getting in the way of the humor? That was of particular concern to the editor. Certain selections that would have been excellent as historical illustrations were eliminated because time had evaporated their humor. And this concern led me also to limit the historical dividing lines.

I have arranged the anthology in three sections. The first covers the period up to the Civil War. The second covers the period between the Civil War and the first World War. And the third deals with the period since.

This arrangement may seem disproportioned. But it is dictated by two stubborn realities. The first is that our American literature took a long time to develop and the literature of our first generations was thin and imitative of the English. The second reality is one that I have already referred to. Humorous literature tends to attach itself to the immediate; much of it therefore passes

with the passing that it comments on. Consequently, the closer we get to our own time the more there is that is understandable and relevant to us.

In making the selections I sought, as I have mentioned, the help of many American writers. It turned out that I underestimated their interest and good nature. I expected that not more than one in five of the six hundred authors I wrote to would reply; instead, considerably more than half were generous enough to offer their suggestions.

Among these were E. B. White, James Thurber, Ben Hecht, S. J. Perelman, Gene Fowler, Sally Benson, Max Lerner, Robert Nathan, Ogden Nash, Walter Lippmann, George Jean Nathan, Katherine Anne Porter, Horace Gregory, Eudora Welty, John Dos Passos, Charles A. Beard, Jesse Stuart, Erskine Caldwell, John Gould Fletcher, Clyde Brion Davis, William Carlos Williams, Quentin Reynolds, Phil Stong, Samuel Hopkins Adams, Dudley Nichols, Philip Wylie, Newton Arvin, Edgar Snow, Oliver La Farge, Stuart Chase, Jerome Weidman, James M. Cain, Frank Sullivan, Carey McWilliams, Hervey Allen, Thomas Craven, Louis Adamic, Kay Boyle, Mark Van Doren, Upton Sinclair, Budd Schulberg, Vincent Sheean, Dorothy Baker, Conrad Richter, Louis Bromfield. . . . But it is idle to multiply names; the complete list would become a mere mass of type.

If this anthology has any special merit, it is largely due to these American writers. Certainly it is a far more varied anthology than it would have been without their help; and quite a number of selections seldom anthologized, if at all, were discovered through them. The very generosity of their response makes it impossible for me adequately to express my gratitude. I therefore offer them a collective thanks in which, I am sure, the reader will share.

An analysis of their replies revealed, among other things, their agreement with general readers' choices as reflected in book sales and library circulation. Among the older humorists, for example, Mark Twain was far in the lead; among contemporaries it was James Thurber, with Ring Lardner a close second, S. J. Perelman third, and E. B. White, Frank Sullivan, Ogden Nash, Robert Benchley, and Leonard Q. Ross very much in the running. It was interesting to note the frequent choice, from the past, of

Frank Stockton's *The Casting Away of Mrs. Lecks and Mrs. Aleshine*; also of Mr. Dooley—Mr. Dooley on anything. Interesting, too, was Katherine Anne Porter's opinion that "William Faulkner has the deepest and most serious humor in this country at present."

In conclusion I should state that in the preparation of this anthology many works dealing directly or in part with American humor were of necessity consulted. I am indebted to all of them, perhaps more than I am consciously aware. But I am particularly conscious of and wish to express my indebtedness to Mr. Walter Blair, author of *Native American Humor* and *Common Sense in American Humor*, to the late Constance Mayfield Rourke, author of *American Humor*, and to Mr. B. A. Botkin, outstanding American folklorist. I also want to thank Mr. Isidor Schneider for his generous cooperation in helping me to get on with the job of assembling this book.

EDWIN SEAVER

PART ONE

Ancestors

NOTE BY THE EDITOR

ONE of the basic national traits emphasized by the American Revolution is expressed in the title of one of the great writings that helped to make that revolution—Tom Paine's *Common Sense*. Paine appealed to common sense, the wisdom of the plain people. The plain man's wisdom became the guide and authority for action, and the salt of our national humor.

The French philosopher Alexis de Tocqueville, who travelled through America in the 1830's, commented in his great work, *American Democracy*, on the tendency of the American "to evade the bondage of system and habit . . . [and] class opinions," and to rely on his own common sense. And a later European democrat, Carl Schurz, rhapsodized over that "characteristic, God-given trait of the American people, sound common sense."

Shrewd, observant common sense appears as a characteristic in American humor from the very beginning—in the anonymous comic songs and the early almanac wits, with the great Ben Franklin at their head. At the same time something related—though on the surface, the opposite of sense, common or uncommon—also made its appearance. This was the tall story about legendary American characters. In a less literate nation and era, these might have evolved into folk legend of the nature of the Greek and Norse myths. In America they became the expression, in self-satirizing banter, of the boastful pride of a people conscious of great achievements.

What is characteristic of the American tall story is that its heroes are not kings and chieftains, but plain working people whose greatness is in their *work* feats. Davy Crockett, the frontier hunter, establishes a line whose forerunners had been Daniel

Boone and the supermen of the old almanacs, a line that continues almost to the beginning of our century, through Mike Fink the flatboatman, Old Stormalong the whaler, Paul Bunyan the logger, John Henry the "steel drivin' man," Pecos Bill the cowboy, Casey Jones the railroad man, and others.

It is significant, however, that these two major strains in our older American humor had their essential beginnings round about 1830. This was the period of the Jackson reforms, which has sometimes been called "the second revolution." Along with a strong upsurge of the common man, it developed a strong national feeling. Jackson's mass following was drawn to him not only because of his democratic beliefs but because he was the military hero who had so thoroughly beaten the English at New Orleans.

American culture at last let go the English apron strings and became plainspoken and American. New classes became readers; newspapers were published for them and new writers wrote for them. The habitual imitations of the British began to fade. Even Washington Irving had modelled himself on the English essayists. But after the 1830's American literature and particularly American humor went native. Two schools of American humor rose, immensely popular in their day, and so much imitated since then that it is hard for us to understand the excitement the originals had for their audiences. One of the schools was the "Down East" or Yankee humor, which built its effects on common sense; the other was the humor of the pioneer Southwest, which was more extravagant and leaned to the tall tale.

Ironically, both schools were used politically against the very movement that had made them possible and that had provided them with their audience. It is an interesting example of the many attempts to turn democracy against itself.

Seba Smith, the Maine editor who may be said to have founded "Down East" humor, began as a political neutral. The famous Down East character, Major Jack Downing, whom he invented, is impatiently scornful, at the beginning, of both political parties. Smith himself describes how he created the neutral Jack Downing:

"The Maine Legislature met in Portland . . . and the two political parties were so evenly balanced, and partisan feeling ran so high, that it was six weeks before they got fairly organized

and proceeded with the business of legislation. The political papers were hot and furious and there was no small excitement through the state which spread . . . to other portions of the country.

"At this juncture . . . the author of these papers, wishing to show the ridiculous position of the legislature in its true light, and also, by something out of the common track of newspaper writing, to give increased interest and popularity to his little daily paper, bethought himself of the plan to bring a green unsophisticated lad from the country into town with a load of axe handles, hoop poles and other notions, for sale, and while waiting the movements of a dull market, let him blunder into the halls of the legislature and, after witnessing for some days their strange doings, sit down and write an account of them to his friends at home in his own plain language."

A New York Tory, Charles Augustus Smith, saw political possibilities in common-sense Jack Downing and calmly appropriated him. Now there were two Jack Downings whose letters convulsed America, and one of them satirized Jackson and his followers. Soon we have the spectacle of the imitated imitating the imitator. Seba Smith's Jack Downing also began caricaturing the Jacksonians.

An idea of the importance of Jack Downing, as representative American, may be gained from the fact that in his physical description, even to striped trousers and other garb, he served as the obvious model of lanky Yankee Uncle Sam.

Similarly, Davy Crockett, at first scorned by the Tories as an uncouth barbarian, became their idol. When he turned renegade from the Jacksonians, Crockett's autobiography and the Crockett almanacs were circulated as anti-Jackson campaign literature.

But whatever the political uses made of it, American humor and, for that matter, American literature were, in some part, the product of the Jacksonian upheaval. The selections in this section of our anthology date mostly from 1830 and after. In them one can see the two main tendencies I have spoken of—the humor of common sense and the humor of conscious, tongue-in-cheek mythmaking. In both, the plain Americans, the American farmer and worker, are the heroes. The old English influence did not immediately die out. It is even to be seen in the more formal

and florid passages of the Southwest humorists. But it was a disappearing strain. American humor—and American literature—developed more and more mightily, to become, in time, a dominating influence in world literature—with American humor firm in that eminence.

Duckin' On't on the Connecticut

"DID you ever hear of the scrape that I and Uncle Zekiel had duckin' on't on the Connecticut?" asked a peddler of an old Dutch woman who had let him spend the night in her cottage in return for a new milk-pan. The story went the round of the almanacs.

"Well, you must know that I and Uncle Zeke took it into our heads one Saturday's afternoon to go a gunning after ducks, in father's skiff; so in we got and sculled down the river; a proper sight of ducks flew backwards and forwards I tell ye—and by'm by a few on 'em lit down by the ma'sh, and went to feeding. I caught up my powder horn to prime, and it slipped right out of my hand and sunk to the bottom of the river. The water was amazingly clear, and I could see it on the bottom. Now I couldn't swim a jot, so sez I to Uncle Zeke, you're a pretty clever fellow, just let me take your powder horn to prime. And don't you think, the stingy fellow wouldn't. Well, says I, you're a pretty good diver, 'n' if you'll dive and get it I'll give you primin'. I thought he'd leave his powder horn; but he didn't, but stuck it in his pocket, and down he went—and there he staid." Here the peddler made a perceptible pause. "I looked down, and what do you think the critter was doin'?" "Lord," exclaimed the old woman, "I don't know!" "There he was," said the peddler, "setting right on the bottom of the river, pouring the powder out of my horn into hizen."

From *American Humor: A Study of the American Character*, by Constance Rourke; copyright 1931 by Harcourt, Brace and Company, Inc.

ANONYMOUS

The Original Song of “Yankee Doodle” (CIRCA 1775)

THE YANKEE’S RETURN FROM CAMP

Father and I went down to camp,
Along with Captain Tooding,
And there we see the men and boys,
As thick as hasty pudding.
Yankee Doodle, keep it up;
Yankee Doodle dandy,
Mind the music and the step,
And with the girls be handy.

And there we see a thousand men,
As rich as Squire David,
And what they wasted every day,
I wish it could be saved.

The 'lasses they eat every day,
Would keep a house a winter;
They have as much that I'll be bound
They eat it when they've a mind to.

And there we see a swamping gun,
Large as a log of maple,

From the Historical Collection of New Hampshire.

Upon a deuced little cart,
A load for father's cattle.

And every time they shoot it off
It takes a horn of powder,
And makes a noise like father's gun,
Only a nation louder.

I went as nigh to one myself
As Siah's underpinning;
And father went as nigh again,
I thought the deuce was in him.

Cousin Simon grew so bold,
I thought he would have cock'd it,
It scared me so, I shrink'd it off,
And hung by father's pocket.

And Captain Davis had a gun,
He kind of clapt his hand on't,
And stuck a crooked stabbing iron
Upon the little end on't.

And there I see a pumpkin-shell
As big as mother's bason,
And every time they touch'd it off,
They scamper'd like the nation.

I see a little barrel too,
The heads were made of leather,
They knock'd upon't with little clubs,
And call'd the folks together.

There was Captain Washington,
Upon a slapping stallion,
A giving orders to his men—
I guess there was a million.

And then the feathers on his hat,
They look'd so tarnal fina,
I wanted pockily to get,
To give to my Jemima.

And then they'd fife away like fun,
And play on cornstalk fiddles;
And some had ribbons red as blood,
All wound about their middles.

The troopers, too, would gallop up,
And fire right in our faces;
It scar'd me almost half to death,
To see them run such races.

Old Uncle Sam came there to change
Some pancakes and some onions,
For 'lasses-cakes to carry home
To give his wife and young ones.

But I can't tell you half I see,
They kept up such a smother;
So I took my hat off, made a bow,
And scampered home to mother.

Wouter Van Twiller

IT WAS in the year of our Lord 1629 that Mynheer Wouter Van Twiller was appointed governor of the province of Nieuw Nederlandts, under the commission and control of their High Mightinesses the Lords States General of the United Netherlands, and the privileged West India Company.

This renowned old gentleman arrived at New Amsterdam in the merry month of June, the sweetest month in all the year; when dan Apollo seems to dance up the transparent firmament,—when the robin, the thrush, and a thousand other wanton songsters make the woods to resound with amorous ditties, and the luxurious little bob-lincoln revels among the clover-blossoms of the meadows,—all which happy coincidence persuaded the old dames of New Amsterdam, who were skilled in the art of foretelling events, that this was to be a happy and prosperous administration.

The renowned Wouter (or Walter) Van Twiller was descended from a long line of Dutch burgomasters, who had successively dozed away their lives and grown fat upon the bench of magistracy in Rotterdam; and who had comported themselves with such singular wisdom and propriety, that they were never either heard or talked of—which, next to being universally applauded, should be the object of ambition of all magistrates and rulers. There are two opposite ways by which some men make a figure in the world; one, by talking faster than they think, and the other, by holding their tongues and not thinking at all. By the first, many a smatterer acquires the reputation of a man of quick parts; by the other, many a dunderpate, like the owl, the stupidest

From Knickerbocker's History of New York, by Washington Irving.

of birds, comes to be considered the very type of wisdom. This, by the way, is a casual remark, which I would not, for the universe, have it thought I apply to Governor Van Twiller. It is true he was a man shut up within himself, like an oyster, and rarely spoke, except in monosyllables; but then it was allowed he seldom said a foolish thing. So invincible was his gravity that he was never known to laugh or even to smile through the whole course of a long and prosperous life. Nay, if a joke were uttered in his presence, that set light-minded hearers in a roar, it was observed to throw him into a state of perplexity. Sometimes he would deign to inquire into the matter, and when, after much explanation, the joke was made as plain as a pike-staff, he would continue to smoke his pipe in silence, and at length, knocking out the ashes, would exclaim, "Well, I see nothing in all that to laugh about."

With all his reflective habits, he never made up his mind on a subject. His adherents accounted for this by the astonishing magnitude of his ideas. He conceived every subject on so grand a scale that he had not room in his head to turn it over and examine both sides of it. Certain it is, that if any matter were propounded to him on which ordinary mortals would rashly determine at first glance, he would put on a vague, mysterious look, shake his capacious head, smoke some time in profound silence, and at length observe, that "he had his doubts about the matter"; which gained him the reputation of a man slow of belief and not easily imposed upon. What is more, it gained him a lasting name; for to this habit of the mind has been attributed his surname of Twiller; which is said to be a corruption of the original Twijfler, or, in plain English, *Doubter*.

The person of this illustrious old gentleman was formed and proportioned as though it had been moulded by the hands of some cunning Dutch statuary, as a model of majesty and lordly grandeur. He was exactly five feet six inches in height, and six feet five inches in circumference. His head was a perfect sphere, and of such stupendous dimensions, that Dame Nature, with all her sex's ingenuity, would have been puzzled to construct a neck capable of supporting it; wherefore she wisely declined the attempt, and settled it firmly on the top of his backbone, just between the shoulders. His body was oblong, and particularly

capacious at bottom; which was wisely ordered by Providence, seeing that he was a man of sedentary habits, and very averse to the idle labor of walking. His legs were short, but sturdy in proportion to the weight they had to sustain; so that when erect he had not a little the appearance of a beer barrel on skids. His face, that infallible index of the mind, presented a vast expanse, unfurrowed by those lines and angles which disfigure the human countenance with what is termed expression. Two small gray eyes twinkled feebly in the midst, like two stars of lesser magnitude in a hazy firmament, and his full-fed cheeks, which seemed to have taken toll of everything that went into his mouth, were curiously mottled and streaked with dusty red, like a spitzenberg apple.

His habits were as regular as his person. He daily took his four stated meals, appropriating exactly an hour to each; he smoked and doubted eight hours, and he slept the remaining twelve of the four-and-twenty. Such was the renowned Wouter Van Twiller, —a true philosopher, for his mind was either elevated above, or tranquilly settled below, the cares and perplexities of this world. He had lived in it for years, without feeling the least curiosity to know whether the sun revolved round it, or it round the sun; and he had watched, for at least half a century, the smoke curling from his pipe to the ceiling, without once troubling his head with any of those numerous theories by which a philosopher would have perplexed his brain, in accounting for its rising above the surrounding atmosphere.

In his council he presided with great state and solemnity. He sat in a huge chair of solid oak, hewn in the celebrated forest of the Hague, fabricated by an experienced timmerman of Amsterdam, and curiously carved about the arms and feet into exact imitations of gigantic eagle's claws. Instead of a scepter, he swayed a long Turkish pipe, wrought with jasmin and amber, which had been presented to a stadtholder of Holland at the conclusion of a treaty with one of the petty Barbary powers. In this stately chair would he sit, and this magnificent pipe would he smoke, shaking his right knee with a constant motion, and fixing his eye for hours together upon a little print of Amsterdam, which hung in a black frame against the opposite wall of the council-chamber. Nay, it has even been said, that when any deliberation of extraordinary

length and intricacy was on the carpet, the renowned Wouter would shut his eyes for full two hours at a time, that he might not be disturbed by external objects; and at such times the internal commotion of his mind was evinced by certain regular guttural sounds, which his admirers declared were merely the noise of conflict, made by his contending doubts and opinions.

It is with infinite difficulty I have been enabled to collect these biographical anecdotes of the great man under consideration. The facts respecting him were so scattered and vague, and divers of them so questionable in point of authenticity, that I have had to give up the search after many, and decline the admission of still more, which would have tended to heighten the coloring of his portrait.

I have been the more anxious to delineate fully the person and habits of Wouter Van Twiller, from the consideration that he was not only the first, but also the best governor that ever presided over this ancient and respectable province; and so tranquil and benevolent was his reign, that I do not find throughout the whole of it a single instance of any offender being brought to punishment,—a most indubitable sign of a merciful governor, and a case unparalleled, excepting in the reign of the illustrious King Log, from whom, it is hinted, the renowned Van Twiller was a lineal descendant.

The very outset of the career of this excellent magistrate was distinguished by an example of legal acumen, that gave flattering presage of a wise and equitable administration. The morning after he had been installed in office, and at the moment that he was making his breakfast from a prodigious earthen dish, filled with milk and Indian pudding, he was interrupted by the appearance of Wandle Schoonhoven, a very important old burgher of New Amsterdam, who complained bitterly of one Barent Bleecker, inasmuch as he refused to come to a settlement of accounts, seeing that there was a heavy balance in favor of the said Wandle. Governor Van Twiller, as I have already observed, was a man of few words; he was likewise a mortal enemy to multiplying writings—or being disturbed at his breakfast. Having listened attentively to the statement of Wandle Schoonhoven, giving an occasional grunt, as he shoveled a spoonful of Indian pudding into his mouth,—either as a sign that he relished the

dish, or comprehended the story,—he called unto him his constable, and pulling out of his breeches-pocket a huge jack-knife, dispatched it after the defendant as a summons, accompanied by his tobacco-box as a warrant.

This summary process was as effectual in those simple days as was the seal-ring of the great Haroun Alraschid among the true believers. The two parties being confronted before him, each produced a book of accounts, written in a language and character that would have puzzled any but a High-Dutch commentator, or a learned decipherer of Egyptian obelisks. The sage Wouter took them one after the other, and having poised them in his hands, and attentively counted over the number of leaves, fell straightway into a very great doubt, and smoked for half an hour without saying a word; at length, laying his finger beside his nose, and shutting his eyes for a moment, with the air of a man who has just caught a subtle idea by the tail, he slowly took his pipe from his mouth, puffed forth a column of tobacco-smoke, and with marvelous gravity and solemnity pronounced, that, having carefully counted over the leaves and weighed the books, it was found, that one was just as thick and heavy as the other: therefore, it was the final opinion of the court that the accounts were equally balanced: therefore, Wandle should give Barent a receipt, and Barent should give Wandle a receipt, and the constable should pay the costs.

This decision, being straightway made known, diffused general joy throughout New Amsterdam, for the people immediately perceived that they had a very wise and equitable magistrate to rule over them. But its happiest effect was, that not another lawsuit took place throughout the whole of his administration; and the office of constable fell into such decay, that there was not one of those losel scouts known in the province for many years. I am the more particular in dwelling on this transaction, not only because I deem it one of the most sage and righteous judgments on record, and well worth the attention of modern magistrates, but because it was a miraculous event in the history of the renowned Wouter—being the only time he was ever known to come to a decision in the whole course of his life.

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

Epitaph for Himself

THE BODY
OF
BENJAMIN FRANKLIN
(LIKE THE COVER OF AN OLD BOOK,
ITS CONTENTS TORN OUT,
AND STRIPT OF ITS LETTERING AND GILDING)
LIES HERE FOOD FOR WORMS;
YET THE WORK ITSELF SHALL NOT BE LOST,
FOR IT WILL (AS HE BELIEVED) APPEAR ONCE
MORE IN A NEW
AND MORE BEAUTIFUL EDITION
CORRECTED AND AMENDED
BY
THE AUTHOR

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN.

Published in *The Many-Sided Franklin*, by Paul Leicester Ford, D. Appleton-Century Company.

The Coon-Skin Trick

WHILE on the subject of election matters, I will just relate a little anecdote about myself, which will show the people to the East how we manage these things on the frontiers. It was when I first run for Congress; I was then in favor of the Hero (Andrew Jackson), for he had chalked out his course so sleek in his letter to the Tennessee legislature that, like Sam Patch, says I, "There can be no mistake in him," and so I went ahead. No one dreamt about the monster and the deposits at that time, and so, as I afterward found, many like myself were taken in by these fair promises, which were worth about as much as a flash in the pan when you have a fair shot at a fat bear.

But I am losing sight of my story. Well, I started off to the Cross Roads dressed in my hunting shirt, and my rifle on my shoulder. Many of our constituents had assembled there to get a taste of the quality of the candidates at orating. Job Snelling, a gander-shanked Yankee, who had been caught somewhere about Plymouth Bay, and been shipped to the West with a cargo of codfish and rum, erected a large shantee, and set up shop for the occasion. A large posse of the voters had assembled before I arrived, and my opponent had already made considerable headway with his speechifying and his treating, when they spied me about a rifle shot from camp, sauntering along as if I was not a party in business. "There comes Crockett," cried one. "Let us hear the colonel," cried another; and so I mounted the stump

From Life of Colonel David Crockett, Written by Himself. Published in A Treasury of American Folklore, edited by B. A. Botkin, Crown Publishers.

that had been cut down for the occasion, and began to bush-whack in the most approved style.

I had not been up long before there was such an uproar in the crowd that I could not hear my own voice, and some of my constituents let me know that they could not listen to me on such a dry subject as the welfare of the nation until they had something to drink, and that I must treat them. Accordingly I jumped down from the rostrum, and led the way to the shantee, followed by my constituents, shouting, "Huzza for Crockett!" and "Crockett forever!"

When we entered the shantee Job was busy dealing out his rum in a style that showed he was making a good day's work of it, and I called for a quart of the best; but the crooked critter returned no other answer than by pointing to a board over the bar, on which he had chalked in large letters, "*Pay to-day and trust to-morrow.*" Now that idea brought me up all standing; it was a sort of cornering in which there was no back-out, for ready money in the West, in those times, was the shyest thing in all natur, and it was most particularly shy with me on that occasion.

The voters, seeing my predicament, fell off to the other side, and I was left deserted and alone, as the Government will be, when he no longer has any offices to bestow. I saw as plain as day that the tide of popular opinion was against me, and that unless I got some rum speedily I should lose my election as sure as there are snakes in Virginny; and it must be done soon, or even burnt brandy wouldn't save me. So I walked away from the shantee, but in another guess sort from the way I entered it, for on this occasion I had no train after me, and not a voice shouted, "Huzza for Crockett!" Popularity sometimes depends on a very small matter indeed; in this particular it was worth a quart of New England rum, and no more.

Well, knowing that a crisis was at hand, I struck into the woods, with my rifle on my shoulder, my best friend in time of need; and, as good fortune would have it, I had not been out more than a quarter of an hour before I treed a fat coon, and in the pulling of a trigger he lay dead at the foot of the tree. I soon whipped his hairy jacket off his back, and again bent my steps

towards the shantee, and walked up to the bar, but not alone, for this time I had half a dozen of my constituents at my heels. I threw down the coon-skin upon the counter, and called for a quart, and Job, though busy dealing out rum, forgot to point at his chalked rules and regulations; for he knew that a coon was as good a legal tender for a quart in the West as a New York shilling any day in the year.

My constituents now flocked about me, and cried, "Huzza for Crockett!" "Crockett forever!" and finding the tide had taken a turn, I told them several yarns to get them in a good humor; and having soon dispatched the value of the coon, I went out and mounted the stump without opposition, and a clear majority of the voters followed me to hear what I had to offer for the good of the nation. Before I was half through one of my constituents moved that they would hear the balance of my speech after they had washed down the first part with some more of Job Snelling's extract of cornstalk and molasses, and the question being put, it was carried unanimously. It wasn't considered necessary to tell the yeas and nays, so we adjourned to the shantee, and on the way I began to reckon that the fate of the nation pretty much depended upon my shooting another coon.

While standing at the bar, feeling sort of bashful while Job's rules and regulations stared me in the face, I cast down my eyes, and discovered one end of the coon-skin sticking between the logs that supported the bar. Job had slung it there in the hurry of business. I gave it a sort of quick jerk, and it followed my hand as natural as if I had been the rightful owner. I slapped it on the counter, and Job, little dreaming that he was barking up the wrong tree, shoved along another bottle, which my constituents quickly disposed of with great good humor, for some of them saw the trick; and then we withdrew to the rostrum to discuss the affairs of the nation.

I don't know how it was, but the voters soon became dry again, and nothing would do but we must adjourn to the shantee; and as luck would have it, the coon-skin was still sticking between the logs, as if Job had flung it there on purpose to tempt me. I was not slow in raising it to the counter, the rum followed, of course, and I wish I may be shot if I didn't, before the day was

over, get ten quarts for the same identical skin, and from a fellow, too, who in those parts was considered as sharp as a steel trap and as bright as a pewter button.

This joke secured me my election, for it soon circulated like smoke among my constituents, and they allowed, with one accord, that the man who could get the whip hand of Job Snelling in fair trade, could outwit Old Nick himself, and was the real grit for them in Congress. Job was by no means popular; he boasted of always being wide awake, and that any one who could take him in was free to do so, for he came from a stock that, sleeping or waking, had always one eye open, and the other not more than half closed. The whole family were geniuses. His father was the inventor of wooden nutmegs, by which Job said he might have made a fortune, if he had only taken out a patent and kept the business in his own hands; his mother, Patience, manufactured the first white oak pumpkin seeds of the mammoth kind, and turned a pretty penny the first season; and his aunt Prudence was the first to discover that corn husks, steeped into tobacco water, would make as handsome Spanish wrappers as ever came from Havana, and that oak leaves would answer all the purpose of filling, for no one could discover the difference except the man who smoked them, and then it would be too late to make a stir about it. Job himself bragged of having made some useful discoveries, the most profitable of which was the art of converting mahogany sawdust into cayenne pepper, which he said was a profitable and safe business; for the people have been so long accustomed to having dust thrown in their eyes that there wasn't much danger of being found out.

The way I got to the blind side of the Yankee merchant was pretty generally known before election day, and the result was that my opponent might as well have whistled jigs to a milestone as attempt to beat up for votes in that district. I beat him out and out, quite back into the old year, and there was scarce enough left of him, after the canvass was over, to make a small grease spot. He disappeared without even leaving a mark behind; and such will be the fate of Adam Huntsman, if there is a fair fight and no gouging.

After the election was over, I sent Snelling the price of the rum, but took good care to keep the fact from the knowledge of

my constituents. Job refused the money, and sent me word that it did him good to be taken in occasionally, as it served to brighten his ideas; but I afterwards learnt when he found out the trick that had been played upon him, he put all the rum I had ordered in his bill against my opponent, who, being elated with the speeches he had made on the affairs of the nation, could not descend to examine into the particulars of a bill of a vendor of rum in the small way.

The Laughing President

RESPECTABLE friends, who cared about reputations as gentlemen and scholars, took it as a little queer, a little like "a country Jake," beneath dignity, that Lincoln should carry with him the book "Joe Miller's Jests," generally called Joe Miller's joke book. English puns, Irish bulls, Greek repartee, folk tales of Jews and Egyptians, brisk anecdotes, filled the book—more than a thousand, each with a serial number. No. 997 told of "the celebrated organist Abbe Vogler, once imitating a thunderstorm so well that for miles round all the milk turned sour." The Irishman was told of, who had been living in Scotland and was asked how he liked the country, replying, "I was sick all the time I was there, and if I had lived there till this time, I'd been dead a year ago." Lord Russell on the scaffold ready to have his head cut off, handed his watch to a bishop, with the remark, "Take this—it shows time; I am going into eternity and no longer need it." Another lord, owing many debts, was asked how he could sleep at night, and answered: "I sleep very well, but I wonder how my creditors can." A wounded officer on a bloody battlefield was howling with pain when another wounded officer near by called to him: "What do you make such a noise for? Do you think nobody is killed but yourself?"

Such was some of the foolery in the book that Lincoln occasionally took out of his carpetbag and read aloud to other lawyers. Some had the pith and poignancy of the grave-digger in the play

From *Abraham Lincoln: The Prairie Years*, by Carl Sandburg; copyright 1926 by Harcourt, Brace and Company, Inc.

of Hamlet, one joke reading: "An Irishman going to be hanged, begged that the rope might be tied under his arms instead of round his neck; for, said Pat, I am so remarkably ticklish in the throat, that if tied there, I will certainly kill myself with laughing." Or again Joke No. 506, reading: "Lieutenant Connolly, an Irishman in the service of the United States, during the American war, chanced to take three Hessian prisoners himself, without any assistance; being asked by the commander-in-chief how he had taken them—'I surrounded them,' was the answer."

There were tales of the people. A traveler in Egypt said to a worker on the land: "I suppose you are quite happy now; the country looks like a garden and every village has its minaret." "God is great," replied the worker. "Our master gives with one hand and takes with two." Another traveler, reporting that he and his servant had made fifty wild Arabs run, said there was nothing surprising about it. "We ran and they ran after us." And again and again little tales of the people, the people. Into the street before Dean Swift's deanery came "a great rabble," waiting "to see the eclipse." And Dean Swift had the big bell rung, and a crier bawling: "O Yes, O Yes, all manner of persons here concerned take notice the eclipse be put off till tomorrow this time! so God save the King and his Reverence the dean." And the rabble went away, all but one Irishman who said he would stay because "the dean might change his mind and have the eclipse that day after all."

Thus Joe Miller's jests. They were a nourishing company to Lincoln. Once in a while he told a story that seemed to have been made over from Joe Miller and placed in Indiana. In his lighter moods his humors matched with the Rabelais definition, "a certain jollity of mind, pickled in the scorn of fortune."

He told of the long-legged boy "sparking" a farmer's daughter when the hostile father came in with a shotgun; the boy jumped through a window, and running across the cabbage patch scared up a rabbit; in about two leaps the boy caught up with the rabbit, kicked it high in the air, and grunted, "Git out of the road and let somebody run that knows how." He told of a Kentucky horse sale where a small boy was riding a fine horse to show off points, when a man whispered to the boy, "Look

here, boy, hain't that horse got the splints?" and the boy answered: "Mister, I don't know what the splints is, but if it's good for him, he has got it; if it ain't good for him, he ain't got it."

Riding to Lewiston an old acquaintance, a weather-beaten farmer, spoke of going to law with his next neighbor. "Been a neighbor of yours for long?" "Nigh onto fifteen year." "Part of the time you get along all right, don't you?" "I reckon we do." "Well, see this horse of mine? I sometimes get out of patience with him. But I know his faults; he does fairly well as horses go; it might take me a long time to get used to some other horses's faults: for all horses have faults."

The instant dignity became bogus his eye caught it. He enjoyed such anecdotes as the one of a Brown County, Indiana, man who killed a neighbor's dog, and the proof of guilt was clear. The defendant's attorney cleared his throat and began a speech, "May it please the court, we are proud to live in a land where justice is administered to the king on the throne and the beggar on his dunghill." The squire then interrupted, "You may go ahead with your speech, but the case *are* decided."

Little folk tales and snatches of odd wisdom known to common people of the ancient kingdoms of the Persians and the Arabians, came to be known among the common people of the farming districts in Illinois, hitched up somehow to Abe Lincoln. When a story or saying had a certain color or smack, it would often be tagged as coming from Lincoln. He had said to a book agent, "For those who like that kind of a book, that's the kind of a book they'll like." He was the man walking along a dusty road when a stranger, driving a buggy, came along. And he asked the stranger, "Will you be so good as to take my overcoat to town for me?" And the man in the buggy said he would. "But how will you get yōur overcoat back again?" "Oh, that's easy! I'm going to stay right inside of it." And of course, said some jokers, it was Abe Lincoln who first told a hotel waiter, "Say, if this is coffee, then please bring me some tea, but if this is tea, please bring me some coffee." And on Abe Lincoln was laid the remark, after tasting ice-cream, "Say, waiter, I don't want to slander this hotel, but this here pudding's froze."

He had come out of a slushy snow into a courtroom to try a case and sat down to dry his feet at the stove. The words of the

lawyer arguing against him came to his ears. All of a sudden he was out in the middle of the courtroom, one shoe off, calling: "Now, judge, that isn't fair. I'm not going to have this jury all fuddled up."

Did he not say when he met a man somewhat matching his own height, "Well, you're up some"—had they not seen how the clay of the earth clung to him? Before posing for a photographer, he stepped into a barber shop, saying, "I better get my hair slicked up." Then, sitting before the camera, he ran his fingers through his hair, caught himself, and said, "Guess I've made a bird's nest of it again." It was he who agreed to make a horse trade, sight unseen, with a judge. First came the judge the next morning with a broken-down bone-rack of a horse; then came Lincoln carrying a wooden sawhorse on his shoulders, saying, "Well, judge, this is the first time I ever got the worst of it in a horse trade."

A walking, stalking library of stories he was. Some of them could have had musical accompaniments from barn-dance fiddles. The prize story tellers of one neighborhood and another had met him and they had competed. "That reminds me." "That's like the feller down at Goose Holler." And occasionally was one with a shine of many cross-lights in it. Lincoln told of a balloonist going up in New Orleans, sailing for hours, and dropping his parachute over a cotton field. The gang of Negroes picking cotton saw a man coming down from the sky in blue silk, in silver spangles, wearing golden slippers. They ran—all but one old timer who had the rheumatism and couldn't get away. He waited till the balloonist hit the ground and walked toward him. Then he mumbled: "Howdy, Massa Jcsus. How's yo' Pa?"

Lincoln had stood with two umbrellas at an imaginary rat hole, impersonating Sam'l, the Quaker boy whose father wanted to stop the boy's using swear words. The two umbrellas were blacksmith tongs. Sam'l's father had said, "Now, Sam'l, thee will sit here until thee has a rat. If I hear thee swear, thee will sit here till thee has another." And Sam'l had sat there for hours, snipping the tongs a few times, but no rat caught. At last one came out from the rat hole, the whiskers peeping up, then the black nose, and the eyes blinking. And the two umbrella tongs snapped together in a flash. And Sam'l yelled, "By God, I have

thee at last!" And Lincoln with a shaking, swaying frame let out a squeal and stood holding an imaginary wriggling rat between the two umbrellas. He had told this in Illinois towns during the debates with Douglas. And Robert R. Hitt, the phonographic reporter, said he forgot himself and politics and business and nearly believed there was a live squeaking rat caught between the two umbrellas. For a roomful of men in a hotel, Lincoln would perform this drama of Sam'l, Sam'l's father, and the rat, acting subtly the rôles of the earnest father, the obstreperous boy, and the furtive rat.

He picked up comedy, as he met it, and passed it on to others. In Cumberland County, one Dr. Hamburger, a Democrat, forced his way to the front to reply to Lincoln's speech. As Hamburger worked into a frothy and threatening speech, a little man with a limp came over to Lincoln and said: "Don't mind *him*. I know *him*; I live here; I'll take care of *him*. Watch me." And he took the platform, and replying brought from Hamburger the cry, "That's a lie." To which the little man with the limp called out with high defiance, "Never mind, I'll take that from *you*—yes, I'll take anything from you, except your pills." At the mention of pills, the doctor snorted, "You scoundrel, you know I've quit practicing medicine." And the little man dropped down on the knee of his best leg, raised his hands toward the sky in thankfulness, and shouted, "Then, thank God! The country is safe."

Plato, the Kane County lawyer, had told him a story about a man who had beaten a dog to death and was in such a rage that he would go out of the house and again beat the dog to death. When Plato came one day to Lincoln's office in Springfield, Lincoln's greeting was, "Well, Plato, have you got that dog killed yet?"

A family in Indiana, according to Lincoln, picked dandelion tops or other leaves and boiled "greens" for dinner in the spring and early summer. Once after a mess of greens the whole family went out of commission. After that when they had greens a big helping would first be forked out for Zerah, a half-wit boy, as the family said: "Try it on Zerah. If he stands it, it won't hurt the rest of us." And a man had a horse that would balk and settle

down on all four legs like a bird dog. He traded off the horse as good for hunting birds. As the horse crossed a creek he settled down in the middle of it like a bird dog and the man who had owned him called to the new rider: "Ride him! Ride him! He's as good for fish as he is for birds."

People looked at Lincoln, searching his face, thinking about his words and ways, ready to believe he was a Great Man. Then he would spill over with a joke or tell of some new horse-play of wit or humor in the next county. The barriers tumbled. He was again a strange friend, a neighbor, a friendly stranger, no far-off Great Man at all. "His face," Moncure D. Conway noted, "had a battered and bronzed look, without being hard." He fitted the measurements, "three parts sublime to one grotesque."

A crowd was bubbling with mirth in an Ohio town as a short friend stood alongside Lincoln to introduce him. Lincoln, pointing at himself, said, "This is the long of it," and putting an arm on the friend's shoulder, "And this is the short of it."

Joc Fifer, an eighteen-year-old corn husker, heard Lincoln at Bloomington after Swett made the opening address. "When Lincoln was starting to speak," Fifer noticed, "some men near me said Lincoln was no great shakes as a public speaker and Swett would make a better showing against Douglas. But when Lincoln got to going they listened; they stood still without moving out of their foot tracks. Lincoln looked out on a wall of faces still as if they had been made of stone."

The Springfield doctor, William Jayne, trying to fathom why Lincoln had carried the crowds with him usually in debating with Douglas, said: "Everybody thinks he is honest and believes what he says. If he was really a great man, or if people regarded him as a great man, he could not do half so much."

He was the man who had started a little circle of people to giggling one morning in Judge Davis's courtroom, and the judge sputtered out: "I am not going to stand this any longer, Mr. Lincoln. You're always disturbing this court with your tom-foolery." The fine was \$5.00, for disorderly conduct. Lincoln sat with his hand over his mouth trying to keep his face straight. Later the judge called Lawrence Weldon to him and Weldon whispered into his ear what it was that Lincoln had told. Then the judge

giggled. Getting his face straight, he announced, "The clerk may remit Mr. Lincoln's fine." The joke had to do with "taking up a subscription to buy Jim Wheeler a new pair of pants."

He could speak of So-and-So as "a quiet, orderly, faithful man." And he could hand a bottle to a baldheaded man he wished to get rid of, with the remarks: "Try this stuff for your hair. Keep it up. They say it will grow hair on a pumpkin. Come back in ten months and tell me how it works." When it was intimated to him that he was consulting too much with Judge Davis, he told of a New Hampshire judge who said: "The only time the chief judge ever consulted was at the close of a long day's session, when he turned and whispered, 'Don't your back ache?' He liked to tell of the strict judge of whom it was said: "He would hang a man for blowing his nose in the street, but he would quash the indictment if it failed to specify which hand he blew it with."

When he presented Coles County relatives with a sad-faced photograph of himself, he said, "This is not a very good-looking picture, but it's the best that could be produced from the poor subject."

* * *

The left corner of Lincoln's mouth had the lines of a laughing man. Beyond a struggle in which he was loser he could see another struggle, and write in a letter, "There will be another blow-up and we shall have fun again." But the right corner of his mouth had a droop; he could say, "I laugh because if I didn't I would weep."

Sometimes a poetry of fine wisdom in short words came from his tongue as carelessly as raindrops on high corn. Milt Hay, whose law office was on the same floor as Lincoln's, told Joe Fifer and others about a goat Lincoln met on the street one morning going to the office.

"Boys had been deviling the goat to make for people and butt them off their feet," said Hay, "and this morning Lincoln with his hands folded behind him, and his chin sunk in his bosom, comes along the street. And the goat makes for him. Well, Lincoln could be pretty quick when he wanted to be. And he stooped over and his two hands got hold of the two horns of the goat."

Then Lincoln dropped down, put his face close to the goat's face and slowly drawled: "Now—there— isn't—any—good—reason—why—I—should—want—to—harm—you. The—world—is—big—enough—for—both—of—us—to—live—in. If—you—behave—yourself—as—you—ought—to,—and—if—I—behave—myself—like—I—ought—to,—we'll—get—along—without—a—cross—word—or—action—and—we'll—live—in—peace—and—harmony like—good—neighbors."

Then Lincoln lifted at the two horns, dropped the goat over a high fence, and walked up the street.

LOUISA MAY ALCOTT

Letter to Her Sister (CIRCA 1865)

MY LASS: This must be a frivolous and dressy letter, because you always want to know about our clothes, and we have been at it lately. May's bonnet is a sight for gods and men. Black and white outside, with a great cockade boiling over the front to meet a red ditto surging from the interior, where a red rainbow darts across the brow, and a surf of white lace foams up on each side. I expect to hear that you and John fell flat in the dust with horror on beholding it.

My bonnet has nearly been the death of me; for, thinking some angel might make it possible for me to go to the mountains, I felt a wish for a tidy hat, after wearing an old one till it fell in tatters from my brow. Mrs. P. promised a bit of gray silk, and I built on that; but when I went for it I found my hat was founded on sand; for she let me down with a crash, saying she wanted the silk herself, and kindly offering me a flannel petticoat instead. I was in woe for a spell, having one dollar in the world, and scorning debt even for that prop of life, a "bonnet." Then I roused myself, flew to Dodge, demanded her cheapest bonnet, found one for a dollar, took it, and went home wondering if the sky would open and drop me a trimming. I am simple in my tastes, but a naked straw bonnet is a little too severely chaste even for me. Sky did not open; so I went to the "Widow Cruise's oil bottle"—my ribbon box—which, by the way, is the eighth wonder of the world, for nothing is ever put in, yet I

From *Louisa May Alcott, Her Life, Letters, and Journals*, edited by Ednah D. Cheney; reprinted by permission of Little, Brown and Company.

This letter was written to the author's older sister, Mrs. Anna Pratt.—Editor.

always find some old dud when all other hopes fail. From this salvation bin I extracted the remains of the old white ribbon (used up, as I thought, two years ago), and the bits of black lace that have adorned a long line of departed hats. Of the lace I made a dish, on which I thriftily served up bows of ribbon, like meat on toast. Inside put the lace bow, which adorns my form anywhere when needed. A white flower A. H. gave me sat airily on the brim,—fearfully unbecoming, but pretty in itself, and in keeping. Strings are yet to be evolved from chaos. I feel that they await me somewhere in the dim future. Green ones *pro tem*. hold this wonder of the age upon my gifted brow, and I survey my hat with respectful awe. I trust you will also, and see in it another great example of the power of mind over matter, and the convenience of a colossal brain in the primeval wrestle with the unruly atoms which have harassed the feminine soul ever since Eve clapped on a modest fig-leaf and did up her hair with a thorn for a hairpin.

I feel very moral to-day, having done a big wash alone, baked, swept the house, picked the hops, got dinner, and written a chapter in "Moods." May gets exhausted with work, though she walks six miles without a murmur.

It is dreadfully dull, and I work so that I may not "brood." Nothing stirring but the wind; nothing to see but dust; no one comes but rose-bugs; so I grub and scold at the "A." because it takes a poor fellow's tales and keeps 'em years without paying for 'em. If I think of my woes I fall into a vortex of debts, dishpans, and despondency awful to see. So I say, "every path has its puddle," and try to play gayly with the tadpoles in my puddle, while I wait for the Lord to give me a lift, or some gallant Raleigh to spread his velvet cloak and fetch me over dry shod.

L. W. adds to my woe by writing of the splendors of Gorham, and says, "When tired, run right up here and find rest among these everlasting hills." All very aggravating to a young woman with one dollar, no bonnet, half a gown, and a discontented mind. It's a mercy the mountains are everlasting, for it will be a century before I get there. Oh, me, such is life!

Now I've done my Jeremiad, and I will go on twanging my harp in the "willow tree."

You ask what I am writing. Well, two books half done, nine

stories simmering, and stacks of fairy stories moulding on the shelf. I can't do much, as I have no time to get into a real good vortex. It unfits me for work, worries Ma to see me look pale, eating nothing, and ply by night. These extinguishers keep genius from burning as I could wish, and I give up ever hoping to do anything unless luck turns for your

Lu.

The Surgeon of the Fleet

CADWALLADER CUTICLE, M.D., and Honorary Member of the most distinguished Colleges of Surgeons both in Europe and America, was our Surgeon of the Fleet. Nor was he at all blind to the dignity of his position; to which, indeed, he was rendered peculiarly competent, if the reputation he enjoyed was deserved. He had the name of being the foremost surgeon in the navy, a gentleman of remarkable science, and a veteran practitioner.

He was a small, withered man, nearly, perhaps quite, sixty years of age. His chest was shallow, his shoulders bent, his pantaloons hung round skeleton legs, and his face was singularly attenuated. In truth, the corporeal vitality of this man seemed, in a good degree, to have died out of him. He walked abroad, a curious patch-work of life and death, with a wig, one glass eye, and a set of false teeth, while his voice was husky and thick; but his mind seemed undebilitated as in youth; it shone out of his remaining eye with basilisk brilliancy.

Like most old physicians and surgeons who have seen much service, and have been promoted to high professional place for their scientific attainments, this Cuticle was an enthusiast in his calling. In private, he had once been heard to say, confidentially, that he would rather cut off a man's arm than dismember the wing of the most delicate pheasant. In particular, the department of Morbid Anatomy was his peculiar love; and in his stateroom below he had a most unsightly collection of Parisian casts, in plaster and wax, representing all imaginable malformations of the human members, both organic and induced by dis-

From *White-Jacket*, by Herman Melville.

ease. Chief among these was a cast, often to be met with in the Anatomical Museums of Europe, and no doubt an unexaggerated copy of a genuine original; it was the head of an elderly woman, with an aspect singularly gentle and meek, but at the same time wonderfully expressive of a gnawing sorrow, never to be relieved. You would almost have thought it the face of some abbess, for some unspeakable crime voluntarily sequestered from human society, and leading a life of agonized penitence without hope; so marvellously sad and tearfully pitiable was this head. But when you first beheld it, no such emotions ever crossed your mind. All your eyes and all your horrified soul were fast fascinated and frozen by the sight of a hideous, crumpled horn, like that of a ram, downward, growing out from the forehead, and partly shadowing the face; but as you gazed, the freezing fascination of its horribleness gradually waned, and then your whole heart burst with sorrow, as you contemplated those aged features, ashy pale and wan. The horn seemed the mark of a curse for some mysterious sin, conceived and committed before the spirit had entered the flesh. Yet that sin seemed something imposed, and not voluntarily sought; some sin growing out of the heartless necessities of the predestination of things; some sin under which the sinner sank in sinless woe.

But no pang of pain, not the slightest touch of concern, ever crossed the bosom of Cuticle when he looked on this cast. It was immovably fixed to a bracket, against the partition of his stateroom, so that it was the first object that greeted his eyes when he opened them from his nightly sleep. Nor was it to hide the face, that upon retiring, he always hung his navy cap upon the upward curling extremity of the horn, for that obscured it but little.

The surgeon's cot-boy, the lad who made up his swinging bed and took care of his room, often told us of the horror he sometimes felt when he would find himself alone in his master's retreat. At times he was seized with the idea that Cuticle was a preternatural being; and once entering his room in the middle watch of the night, he started at finding it enveloped in a thick, bluish vapour, and stifling with the odours of brimstone. Upon hearing a low groan from the smoke, with a wild cry he darted from the place, and, rousing the occupants of the neighbouring staterooms,

it was found that the vapour proceeded from smouldering bunches of Lucifer matches, which had become ignited through the carelessness of the surgeon. Cuticle, almost dead, was dragged from the suffocating atmosphere, and it was several days ere he completely recovered from its effects. This accident took place immediately over the powder magazine; but as Cuticle, during his sickness, paid dearly enough for transgressing the laws prohibiting combustibles in the gun-room, the captain contented himself with privately remonstrating with him.

Well knowing the enthusiasm of the surgeon for all specimens of morbid anatomy, some of the ward-room officers used to play upon his credulity, though, in every case, Cuticle was not long in discovering their deceptions. Once, when they had some sago pudding for dinner, and Cuticle chanced to be ashore, they made up a neat parcel of this bluish-white, firm, jelly-like preparation, and placing it in a tin box, carefully sealed with wax, they deposited it on the gun-room table, with a note, purporting to come from an eminent physician in Rio, connected with the Grand National Museum on the *Praca d'Acclamacao*, begging leave to present the scientific *Senhor Cuticle*—with the donor's compliments—an uncommonly fine specimen of a cancer.

Descending to the ward-room, Cuticle spied the note, and no sooner read it, than, clutching the case, he opened it, and exclaimed, "Beautiful! splendid! I have never seen a finer specimen of this most interesting disease."

"What have you there, Surgeon Cuticle?" said a lieutenant, advancing.

"Why, sir, look at it; did you ever see anything more exquisite?"

"Very exquisite indeed; let me have a bit of it, will you, Cuticle?"

"Let you have a bit of it!" shrieked the surgeon, starting back. "Let you have one of my limbs! I wouldn't mar so large a specimen for a hundred dollars; but what can you want of it? You are not making collections!"

"I'm fond of the article," said the lieutenant; "it's a fine cold relish to bacon or ham. You know, I was in New Zealand last cruise, Cuticle, and got into sad dissipation there among the cannibals; come, let's have a bit, if it's only a mouthful."

"Why, you infernal Fecjeel!" shouted Cuticle, eyeing the other

with a confounded expression; "you don't really mean to eat a piece of this cancer?"

"Hand it to me, and see whether I will not," was the reply.

"In God's name, take it!" cried the surgeon, putting the case into his hands, and then standing with his own uplifted.

"Steward!" cried the lieutenant, "the castor—quick! I always use plenty of pepper with this dish, surgeon; it's oystery. Ah! this is really delicious," he added, smacking his lips over a mouthful. "Try it now, surgeon, and you'll never keep such a fine dish as this, lying uneaten on your hands, as a mere scientific curiosity."

Cuticle's whole countenance changed; and, slowly walking up to the table, he put his nose close to the tin case, then touched its contents with his finger and tasted it. Enough. Buttoning up his coat, in all the tremblings of an old man's rage he burst from the ward-room, and, calling for a boat, was not seen again for twenty-four hours.

But though, like all other mortals, Cuticle was subject at times to these fits of passion—at least under outrageous provocation—nothing could exceed his coolness when actually employed in his imminent vocation. Surrounded by moans and shrieks, by features distorted with anguish inflicted by himself, he yet maintained a countenance almost supernaturally calm; and unless the intense interest of the operation flushed his wan face with a momentary tinge of professional enthusiasm, he toiled away, untouched by the keenest misery coming under a fleet-surgeon's eye. Indeed, long habituation to the dissecting-room and the amputation-table had made him seemingly impervious to the ordinary emotions of humanity. Yet you could not say that Cuticle was essentially a cruel-hearted man. His apparent heartlessness must have been of a purely scientific origin. It is not to be imagined even that Cuticle would have harmed a fly, unless he could procure a microscope powerful enough to assist him in experimenting on the minute vitals of the creature.

But notwithstanding his marvellous indifference to the sufferings of his patients, and in spite even of his enthusiasm in his vocation—not cooled by frosting old age itself—Cuticle, on some occasions, would affect a certain disrelish of his profession, and declaim against the necessity that forced a man of his humanity to perform a surgical operation. Especially was it apt to be thus

with him, when the case was one of more than ordinary interest. In discussing it, previous to setting about it, he would veil his eagerness under an aspect of great circumspection, curiously marred, however, by continual sallies of unsuppressible impatience. But the knife once in his hand, the compassionless surgeon himself, undisguised, stood before you. Such was Cadwallader Cuticle, our Surgeon of the Fleet.

Young Man Who Wouldn't Hoe Corn

I'll sing you a song and it's not very long,
It's about a young man who wouldn't hoe corn;
The reason why, I can't tell,
This young man was always well.

He planted his corn in the month of June
And in July it was knee high;
First of September came a big frost
And all this young man's corn was lost.

He went to the fence and there peeped in,
The weeds and the grass came up to his chin;
The weeds and the grass they grew so high,
They caused this young man for to sigh.

So he went down to his neighbor's door,
Where he had often been before:
"Pretty little miss, will you marry me?
Pretty little miss, what do you say?"

"Here you are, a-wanting for to wed
And cannot make your own cornbread!
Single I am, single I'll remain,
A lazy man I'll not maintain.

From *Resettlement Song Sheets*, Number Three, edited by Charles Seeger.
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"You go down to that pretty little widow
And I hope by heck that you don't get her."
She gave him the mitten, sure as you're born,
All because he wouldn't hoe corn.

My First Visit to Portland

IN THE fall of the year 1829, I took it into my head I'd go to Portland. I had heard a good deal about Portland, what a fine place it was, and how the folks got rich there proper fast; and that fall there was a couple of new papers come up to our place from there, called the "Portland Courier" and "Family Reader," and they told a good many queer kind of things about Portland, and one thing and another; and all at once it popped into my head, and I up and told father, and says,—

"I am going to Portland, whether or no; and I'll see what this world is made of yet."

Father stared a little at first, and said he was afraid I would get lost; but when he see I was bent upon it, he give it up, and he stepped to his chist, and opened the till, and took out a dollar, and he gave it to me; and says he,—

"Jack, this is all I can do for you; but go and lead an honest life, and I believe I shall hear good of you yet."

He turned and walked across the room, but I could see the tears start into his eyes. And mother sat down and had a hearty crying-spell.

This made me feel rather bad for a minit or two, and I almost had a mind to give it up; and then again father's dream came into my mind, and I mustered up courage, and declared I'd go. So I tackled up the old horse, and packed in a load of axe-handles, and a few notions; and mother fried me some doughnuts, and put 'em into a box, along with some cheese, and sausages, and ropic me up another shirt, for I told her I didn't know how long I

From The Portland Daily Courier.

should be gone. And after I got rigged out, I went round and bid all the neighbors good-by, and jumped in, and drove off for Portland.

Aunt Sally had been married two or three years before, and moved to Portland; and I inquired round till I found out where she lived, and went there, and put the old horse up, and eat some supper, and went to bed.

And the next morning I got up, and straightened right off to see the editor of the "Portland Courier," for I knew by what I had seen in his paper, that he was just the man to tell me which way to steer. And when I come to see him, I knew I was right; for soon as I told him my name, and what I wanted, he took me by the hand as kind as if he had been a brother, and says he,—

"Mister," says he, "I'll do anything I can to assist you. You have come to a good town; Portland is a healthy, thriving place, and any man with a proper degree of enterprise may do well here. But," says he, "stranger," and he looked mighty kind of knowing, says he, "if you want to make out to your mind, you must do as the steamboats do."

"Well," says I, "how do they do?" for I didn't know what a steamboat was, any more than the man in the moon.

"Why," says he, "they go ahead. And you must drive about among the folks here just as though you were at home, on the farm among the cattle. Don't be afraid of any of them, but figure away, and I dare say you'll get into good business in a very little while. But," says he, "there's one thing you must be careful of; and that is, not to get into the hands of those are folks that trades up round Huckler's Row, for ther's some sharpers up there, if they get hold of you, would twist your eye-teeth out in five minits."

Well, arter he had giv me all the good advice he could, I went back to Aunt Sally's ag'in, and got some breakfast; and then I walked all over the town, to see what chance I could find to sell my axe-handles and things and to get into business.

After I had walked about three or four hours, I come along towards the upper end of the town, where I found there were stores and shops of all sorts and sizes. And I met a feller, and says I,—

"What place is this?"

"Why, this," says he, "is Huckler's Row."

"What!" says I, "are these the stores where the traders in Huckler's Row keep?"

And says he, "Yes."

"Well, then," says I to myself, "I have a pesky good mind to go in and have a try with one of these chaps, and see if they can twist my eye-teeth out. If they can get the best end of a bargain out of me, they can do what there ain't a man in our place can do; and I should just like to know what sort of stuff these 'ere Portland chaps are made of." So I goes into the best-looking store among 'em. And I see some biscuit on the shelf, and says I,—

"Mister, how much do you ax apiece for them 'ere biscuits?"

"A cent apiece," says he.

"Well," says I, "I shan't give you that, but, if you've a mind to, I'll give you two cents for three of them, for I begin to feel a little as though I would like to take a bite."

"Well," says he, "I wouldn't sell 'em to anybody else so, but, seeing it's you, I don't care if you take 'em."

I knew he lied, for he never seen me before in his life. Well, he handed down the biscuits, and I took 'em and walked round the store awhile, to see what else he had to sell. At last says I,—

"Mister, have you got any good cider?"

Says he, "Yes, as good as ever ye see."

"Well," says I, "what do you ax a glass for it?"

"Two cents," says he.

"Well," says I, "seems to me I feel more dry than I do hungry now. Ain't you a mind to take these 'ere biscuits again, and give me a glass of cider?"

And says he,—

"I don't care if I do."

So he took and laid 'em on the shelf again, and poured out a glass of cider. I took the cider and drinkt it down, and, to tell the truth, it was capital good cider. Then says I,—

"I guess it's time for me to be a-going," and I stept along towards the door; but says he,—

"Stop, mister: I believe you haven't paid me for the cider?"

"Not paid you for the cider!" says I. "What do you mean by that? Didn't the biscuits that I give you just come to the cider?"

"Oh, ah, right!" says he.

So I started to go again, and says he,—

"But stop there, mister: you didn't pay me for the biscuits."

"What!" says I, "do you mean to impose upon me? do you think I am going to pay you for the biscuits and let you keep them, too? Ain't they there now on your shelf? What more do you want? I guess, sir, you don't whittle me in that way."

So I turned about and marched off, and left the feller staring and scratching his head, as though he was struck with a dunderment.

Howsomever, I didn't want to cheat him, only jest to show 'em it wa'n't so easy a matter to pull my eye-teeth out; so I called in next day and paid him two cents.

Shaking Hands

MR. EDITOR,—There are a few things of more common occurrence than shaking hands; and yet I do not recollect that much has been speculated upon the subject. I confess, when I consider to what unimportant and futile matters the attention of writers and readers has often been directed, I am surprised that no one has been found to *handle* so important a subject as this; and attempt to give the public a rational view of the doctrine and discipline of shaking hands. It is a subject on which I have myself reflected a good deal, and I beg leave to offer you a few remarks on the origin of the practice, and the various forms in which it is exercised.

I have been unable to find among the ancients any distinct mention of *shaking hands*. They followed the heartier practice of hugging or embracing, which has not wholly disappeared among grown persons in Europe, and children in our own country, and has unquestionably the advantage on the score of cordiality. When the ancients confined the business of salutation to the hands alone, they *joined* but did not *shake* them. Although I find frequently such phrases as *jungere dextras hospitio*, I do not recollect to have met with that of *agitare dextras*. I am inclined to think that the practice grew up in the ages of chivalry, when the cumbrous iron mail, in which the knights were cased, prevented their embracing; and when, with fingers clothed in steel, the simple touch or joining of the hands would have been but cold welcome; so that a prolonged junction was a natural resort, to express cordiality; and as it would have been awkward to keep

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the hands unemployed in this position, a gentle agitation or shaking might have been naturally introduced. How long the practice may have remained in this rudimental stage, it is impossible in the silence of history to say; nor is there anything in the English chroniclers, in Philip de Comines, or the Byzantine historians, which enables us to trace the progress of the art into the forms in which it now exists among us.

Without, therefore, availing myself of the privilege of theorists to supply by conjecture the want of history or tradition, I shall pass immediately to the enumeration of these forms:

1. The *pump-handle* shake is the first which deserves notice. It is executed by taking your friend's hand, and working it up and down through an arc of fifty degrees, for about a minute and a half. To have its true nature, force and distinctive character, this shake should be performed with a fair, steady motion. No attempt should be made to give it grace, and still less vivacity; as the few instances in which the latter has been tried, have universally resulted in dislocating the shoulder of the person on whom it has been attempted. On the contrary, persons who are partial to the *pump-handle* shake, should be at some pains to give an equable, tranquil movement to the operation, which should, on no account, be continued after perspiration on the part of your friend has commenced.

2. The *pendulum* shake may be mentioned next, as being somewhat similar in character, but moving, as the name indicates, in a horizontal, instead of a perpendicular direction. It is executed, by sweeping your hand horizontally toward your friend's, and, after the junction is effected, rowing with it from one side to the other, according to the pleasure of the parties. The only caution in its use, which needs particularly to be given, is not to insist on performing it in a plane strictly parallel to the horizon, when you meet with a person who has been educated to the *pump-handle* shake. It is well-known that people cling to the forms in which they have been educated, even when the substance is sacrificed in adhering to them. I had two uncles, both estimable men, one of whom had been brought up in the *pump-handle* shake, and another had brought home the *pendulum* from a foreign voyage. They met, joined hands, and attempted to put them in motion. They were neither of them feeble men.

One endeavored to pump, and the other to paddle; their faces reddened,—the drops stood on their foreheads; and it was at last a pleasing illustration of the doctrine of the composition of forces, to see their hands slanting into an exact diagonal; in which line they ever afterwards shook;—but it was plain to see there was no cordiality in it, and as is usually the case with compromises, both parties were discontented.

3. The *tourniquet shake* is the next in importance. It derives its name from the instruments made use of by surgeons to stop the circulation of the blood, in a limb about to be amputated. It is performed by clasping the hand of your friend, as far as you can, in your own, and then contracting the muscles of your thumb, fingers and palm, till you have induced any degree of compression you may propose. Particular care ought to be taken if your own hand is as hard and as big as a frying-pan, and that of your friend as small and soft as a young maiden's, not to make use of the tourniquet shake to the degree that will force the small bones of the wrist out of place. A hearty young friend of mine, who had pursued the study of geology, and acquired an unusual hardness and strength of hand and wrist, by the use of the hammer, on returning from a scientific excursion, gave his gouty uncle the tourniquet shake with such severity as reduced the old gentleman's fingers to powder, for which my friend had the satisfaction of being disinherited, as soon as his uncle got well enough to hold a pen.

4. The *cordial grapple* is a shake of some interest. It is a hearty, boisterous agitation of your friend's hand, accompanied with moderate pressure, and loud, cheerful exclamations of welcome. It is an excellent travelling shake, and well adapted to make friends. It is indiscriminately performed.

5. The *Peter Grievous touch* is opposed to the *cordial grapple*. It is a pensive, tranquil junction, followed by a mild, subsultory motion, a cast-down look, and an inarticulate inquiry after your friend's health.

6. The *prude major* and *prude minor* are nearly monopolized by ladies. They cannot be accurately described, but are constantly noticed in practice. They never extend beyond the fingers; and the *prude major* allows you to touch even them only down to the second joint. The *prude minor* gives you the whole of the

fore-finger. Considerable skill may be shown in performing these with nice variations, such as extending the left hand, instead of the right, or having a new glossy kid glove over the finger you extend.

I might go through a long list, sir, of the *gripe-royal*, the *saw-mill shake*, and the shake *with malice-prepense*; but these are only factitious combinations of the three fundamental forms already described, as the *pump-handle*, the *pendulum*, and the *tourniquet*. In like manner, the *loving pat*, the *reach romantic* and the *sentimental clasp*, may be reduced in their main movements to various combinations and modifications of the *cordial grapple*, *Peter Grievous touch*, and the *prude major and minor*. I should trouble you with a few remarks, in conclusion, on the mode of shaking hands, as an indication of characters, but I see a friend coming up the avenue who is addicted to the *pump-handle*. I dare not tire my wrist by further writing.

Aunt Dinah's Kitchen

LIKE a certain class of modern philosophers, Dinah perfectly scorned logic and reason in every shape, and always took refuge in intuitive certainty; and here she was perfectly impregnable. No possible amount of talent, or authority, or explanation could ever make her believe that any other way was better than her own, or that the course she had pursued in the smallest matter could be in the least modified. This had been a conceded point with her old mistress, Marie's mother; and "Miss Marie," as Dinah always called her young mistress, even after her marriage, found it easier to submit than contend; and so Dinah had ruled supreme. This was the easier, in that she was perfect mistress of that diplomatic art which unites the utmost subservience of manner with the utmost inflexibility as to measure.

Dinah was the mistress of the whole art and mystery of excuse-making, in all its branches. Indeed, it was an axiom with her that the cook can do no wrong, and a cook in a Southern kitchen finds abundance of heads and shoulders on which to lay off every sin and frailty, so as to maintain her own immaculateness entire. If any part of the dinner was a failure, there were fifty indisputably good reasons for it, and it was the fault, undeniably, of fifty other people, whom Dinah berated with unsparing zeal.

But it was very seldom that there was any failure in Dinah's last results. Though her mode of doing everything was peculiarly meandering and circuitous, and without any sort of calculation as to time and place,—though her kitchen generally looked as if

From *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, by Harriet Beecher Stowe; reprinted by permission of Houghton Mifflin Company.

it had been arranged by a hurricane blowing through it, and she had about as many places for each cooking utensil as there were days in the year,—yet, if one could have patience to wait her own good time, up would come her dinner in perfect order, and in a style of preparation with which an epicure could find no fault.

It was now the season of incipient preparation for dinner. Dinah, who required large intervals of reflection and repose, and was studious of ease in all her arrangements, was seated on the kitchen floor, smoking a short, stumpy pipe, to which she was much addicted, and which she always kindled up, as a sort of censer, whenever she felt the need of an inspiration in her arrangements. It was Dinah's mode of invoking the domestic Muses.

Seated around her were various members of that rising race with which a Southern household abounds, engaged in shelling peas, peeling potatoes, picking pin-feathers out of fowls, and other preparatory arrangements, Dinah every once in a while interrupting her meditations to give a poke, or a rap on the head, to some of the young operators, with the pudding-stick that lay by her side. In fact, Dinah ruled over the woolly heads of the younger members with a rod of iron, and seemed to consider them born for no earthly purpose but to “save her steps,” as she phrased it. It was the spirit of the system under which she had grown up, and she carried it out to its full extent.

Miss Ophelia, after passing on her reformatory tour through all the other parts of the establishment, now entered the kitchen. Dinah had heard, from various sources, what was going on, and resolved to stand on defensive and conservative ground,—mentally determined to oppose and ignore every new measure, without any actual and observable contest.

The kitchen was a large, brick-floored apartment, with a great old-fashioned fireplace stretching along one side of it,—an arrangement which St. Clair had vainly tried to persuade Dinah to exchange for the convenience of a modern cook-stove. Not she. No Pusseyite, or conservative of any school, was ever more inflexibly attached to time-honored inconveniences than Dinah.

When St. Clair had first returned from the North, impressed with the system and order of his uncle's kitchen arrangements, he had largely provided his own with an array of cupboards, drawers,

and various apparatus, to induce systematic regulation, under the sanguine illusion that it would be of any possible assistance to Dinah in her arrangements. He might as well have provided them for a squirrel or a magpie. The more drawers and closets there were, the more hiding-holes could Dinah make for the accommodation of old rags, hair-combs, old shoes, ribbons, cast-off artificial flowers, and other articles of *vertu*, wherein her soul delighted.

When Miss Ophelia entered the kitchen, Dinah did not rise, but smoked on in sublime tranquillity, regarding her movements obliquely out of the corner of her eye, but apparently intent only on the operations around her.

Miss Ophelia commenced opening a set of drawers.

"What is this drawer for, Dinah?" she said.

"It's handy for 'most anything, missis," said Dinah. So it appeared to be. From the variety it contained Miss Ophelia pulled out first a fine damask table-cloth stained with blood, having evidently been used to envelop some raw meat.

"What's this, Dinah? You don't wrap up meat in your mistress's best table-cloth?"

"Oh, Lor', missis, no; the towels was all a-missin', so I just did it. I laid it out to wash that ar; that's why I put it thar."

"Shir'less!" said Miss Ophelia to herself, proceeding to tumble over the drawer, where she found a nutmeg-grater and two or three nutmegs, a Methodist hymn-book, a couple of soiled Madras handkerchiefs, some yarn and knitting-work, a paper of tobacco and a pipe, a few crackers, one or two gilded china saucers with some pomade in them, one or two thin old shoes, a piece of flannel carefully pinned up enclosing some small white onions, several damask table-napkins, some coarse crash towels, some twine and darning-needles, and several broken papers, from which sundry sweet herbs were sifting into the drawer.

"Where do you keep your nutmegs, Dinah?" said Miss Ophelia, with the air of one who "prayed for patience."

"Most anywhar, missis; there's some in that cracked tea-cup up there, and there's some over in that ar cupboard."

"Here are some in the grater," said Miss Ophelia, holding them up.

"Laws, yes; I put 'em there this morning; I likes to keep my

things handy," said Dinah. "You Jakel! what are you stopping for? You'll cotch it! Be still, thar!" she added, with a dive of her stick at the criminal.

"What's this?" said Miss Ophelia, holding up the saucer of pomade.

"Laws, it's my *har-grease*; I put it thar to have it handy."

"Do you use your mistress's best saucers for that?"

"Law! it was 'cause I was driv' and in sich a hurry. I was gwine to change it this very day."

"Here are two damask table-napkins."

"Them table-napkins I put thar to get 'em washed out some day."

"Don't you have some place here on purpose for things to be washed?"

"Well, Mas'r St. Clair got dat ar chest, he said, for dat; but I likes to mix up biscuit and hev my things on it some days, and then it ain't handy a-liftin' up the lid."

"Why don't you mix your biscuits on the pastry-table, there?"

"Law, missis, it gets sot so full of dishes, and one thing and another, der ain't no room, noways."

"But you should wash your dishes, and clear them away."

"Wash my dishes!" said Dinah, in a high key, as her wrath began to rise over her habitual respect of manner. "What does ladies know 'bout work, I want to know? When'd mas'r ever get his dinner, if I was to spend all my time a-washin' and a-puttin' up dishes? Miss Marie never telled me so, nohow."

"Well, here are these onions."

"Laws, yes!" said Dinah; "that is whar I put 'em, now. I couldn't 'member. Them's particular onions I was a-savin' for dis yer very stew. I'd forgot they was in dat ar old flannel."

Miss Ophelia lifted out the sifting papers of sweet herbs. "I wish missis wouldn't touch dem ar. I likes to keep my things where I knows whar to go to 'em," said Dinah, rather decidedly.

"But you don't want these holes in the papers."

"Them's handy for siftin' on't out," said Dinah.

"But you see it spills all over the drawer."

"Laws, yes! if missis will go a-tumblin' things all up so, it will. Missis has spilt lots dat ar way," said Dinah, coming uneasily to the drawers. "If missis only will go up-st'rs till my clarin'-up

time comes, I'll have everything right; but I can't do nothin' when ladies is 'round a-henderin'. You Sam, don't you gib de baby dat ar sugar-bowl! I'll crack ye over, if ye don't mind!"

"I'm going through the kitchen, and going to put everything in order, *once*, Dinah; and then I'll expect you to *keep* it so."

"Lor' now, Miss 'Phelia, dat ar ain't no way for ladies to do. I never did see ladies doin' no sich; my old missis nor Miss Marie never did, and I don't see no kinder need on't." And Dinah stalked indignantly about, while Miss Ophelia piled and sorted dishes, emptied dozens of scattering bowls of sugar into one receptacle, sorted napkins, table-cloths, and towels, for washing; washing, wiping and arranging with her own hands, and with a speed and alacrity which perfectly amazed Dinah.

"Lor', now! if dat ar de way dem Northern ladies do, dey ain't ladies nohow," she said to some of her satellites, when at a safe hearing-distance. "I has things as straight as anybody, when my clarin'-up times comes; but I don't want ladies 'round a-henderin' and gettin' my things all where I can't find 'em."

To do Dinah justice, she had, at irregular periods, paroxysms of reformation and arrangement, which she called "clarin'-up times," when she would begin with great zeal and turn every drawer and closet wrong side outward on the floor or tables, and make the ordinary confusion sevenfold more confounded. Then she would light her pipe and leisurely go over her arrangements, looking things over and discoursing upon them; making all the young fry scour most vigorously on the tin things, and keeping up for several hours a most energetic state of confusion, which she would explain to the satisfaction of all inquirers by the remark that she was a "clarin'-up." "She couldn't hev things a-gwine on so as they had been, and she was gwine to make these yer young ones keep better order"; for Dinah herself, somehow, indulged the illusion that she herself was the soul of order, and it was only the *young uns*, and the everybody else in the house, that were the cause of anything that fell short of perfection in this respect. When all the tins were scoured, and the tables scrubbed snowy white, and everything that could offend tucked out of sight in holes and corners, Dinah would dress herself up in a smart dress, clean apron, and high, brilliant Madras turban, and tell all marauding "young uns" to keep out of the kitchen,

for she was gwine to have things kept nice. Indeed, these periodic seasons were often an inconvenience to the whole household, for Dinah would contract such an immoderate attachment to her scoured tin as to insist upon it that it shouldn't be used again for any possible purpose,—at least till the ardor of the “clarin'-up” period abated.

The Briefless Barrister

An attorney was taking a turn,
In shabby habiliments drest;
His coat it was shockingly worn,
And the rust had invested his vest.

His breeches had suffered a breach,
His linen and worsted were worse;
He had scarce a whole crown in his hat,
And not half a crown in his purse.

And thus as he wandered along,
A cheerless and comfortless elf,
He sought for relief in a song,
Or complainingly talked to himself:—

“Unfortunate man that I am!
I’ve never a client but grief:
The case is, I’ve no case at all,
And in brief, I’ve ne’er had a brief!

“I’ve waited and waited in vain,
Expecting an ‘opening’ to find,

This selection, and “The Coquette,” which follows, are both from *Poems*, by John G. Saxe; reprinted by permission of Houghton Mifflin Company.

Where an honest young lawyer might gain
Some reward for toil of his mind.

" 'Tis not that I'm wanting in law,
Or lack an intelligent face,
That others have cases to plead,
While I have to plead for a case.

"O, how can a modest young man
E'er hope for the smallest progression,—
The profession's already so full
Of lawyers so full of profession!"

While thus he was strolling around,
His eye accidentally fell
On a very deep hole in the ground,
And he sighed to himself, "It is well!"

To curb his emotions, he sat
On the curbstone the space of a minute,
Then cried, "Here's an opening at last!"
And in less than a jiffy was in it!

Next morning twelve citizens came
('twas the coroner bade them attend),
To the end that it might be determined
How the man had determined his end!

"The man was a lawyer, I hear,"
Quoth the foreman who sat on the corse.
"A lawyer? Alas!" said another,
"Undoubtedly died of remorse!"

A third said, "He knew the deceased,
An Attorney well versed in the laws,
And as to the cause of his death,
'Twas no doubt for the want of a cause."

The jury decided at length,
After solemnly weighing the matter,
That the lawyer was drowned, because
He could not keep his head above water!

The Coquette, A Portrait

"You're clever at drawing, I own,"
Said my beautiful cousin Lisette,
As we sat by the window alone,
"But say, can you paint a Coquette?"

"She's painted already," quoth I;
"Nay, nay!" said the laughing Lisette,
"Now none of your joking,—but try
And paint me a thorough Coquette."

"Well, cousin," at once I began
In the ear of the eager Lisette,
"I'll paint you as well as I can
That wonderful thing, a Coquette.

"She wears a most beautiful face,"
("Of course!" said the pretty Lisette),
"And isn't deficient in grace,
Or else she were not a Coquette.

"And then she is daintily made"
(A smile from the dainty Lisette),
"By people expert in the trade
Of forming a proper Coquette.

"She's the winningest ways with the beaux,"
("Go on!"—said the winning Lisette),
"But there isn't a man of them knows
The mind of the fickle Coquette!

"She knows how to weep and to sigh,"
(A sigh from the tender Lisette),
"But her weeping is all in my eye,—
Not that of the cunning Coquette!

"In short, she's a creature of art,"
("Oh hush!" said the frowning Lisette),
"With merely the ghost of a heart,—
Enough for a thorough Coquette.

"And yet I could easily prove"
("Now don't!" said the angry Lisette),
"The lady is always in love,—
In love with herself,—the Coquette!

"There,—do not be angry!—you know,
My dear little cousin Lisette,
You told me a moment ago
To paint *you*—a thorough Coquette!"

Febold Feboldson— Real American Weather

SOMEBODY ought to do something about the weather. It's downright disgraceful that in most parts of the United States the climate is of foreign origin. Florida and California brazenly boast of Mediterranean sunshine. Winter resorts in the Adirondacks are only imitations of those in Switzerland. Even the famous blizzard of 1888 came from Siberia. In fact, there's only one place where you can get real, genuine, American weather, and that's on the great plains between the Mississippi and the Rockies.

In the early days, I guess, it was even more American than it is now. At least that's what Bergstrom Stromberg says. He's way past ninety and has seen some big weather in his day. Besides, he's heard all about the climate of the early days directly from his uncle, the famous Febold Feboldson. Febold was the first white settler west of the Mississippi, not counting Spaniards and Frenchmen who don't count anyway.

Take 1848 for instance. That was the year the Petrified Snow covered the plains all summer and held up the '48ers in their gold rush to California with the result that they became '49ers. At that time Febold was operating an ox train between San Francisco and Kansas City, because the snow prevented him from doing anything else.

Since Febold was the only plainsman able to make the trip
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that year, the '48ers appealed to him for help. His secret was to load up with sand from Death Valley, California. The sands of the desert never grow cold, nor did Febold and his oxen. This sand he sold to the gold rushers at fifty dollars a bushel, and they were glad to get it.

Then the '49ers began to swarm over the snow-covered plains in their prairie schooners. But before they reached the Rockies the jolting of the wagons scattered the sand and covered up every bit of the Petrified Snow. And that's the reason, according to Bergstrom Stromberg, that the prairies are so all fired hot in the summer.

Febold cursed himself twenty times a day for twenty years for selling the '48ers that sand. Then he spent the next twenty years trying various schemes to moderate the climate. He finally gave up in disgust and moved to California. Thus he set an example which all good Middlewesterners have followed ever since.

Or take the popcorn ball. There's a genuine American product. Most people think that someone invented the popcorn ball, but it's actually a product of the American weather. It invented itself, so to speak, on Bergstrom Stromberg's ranch in the early days when Febold owned the place.

It was during that peculiar year known as the Year of the Striped Weather which came between the years of the Big Rain and the Great Heat. This year the weather was both hot and rainy. There was a mile strip of scorching sunshine and then a mile strip of rain. It so happened that on Febold's farm there were both kinds of weather. The sun shone on his cornfield until the corn began to pop, while the rain washed the syrup out of his sugar cane.

Now the cane field was on a hill and the cornfield was in a valley. The syrup flowed downhill into the popped corn and rolled it into great balls. Bergstrom says some of them were hundreds of feet high and looked like big tennis balls from a distance. You never see any of them now, because the grasshoppers ate them all up in one day, July 21, 1874.

But the Great Fog, I suppose, was the biggest piece of American weather that ever hit the great plains. It followed the year of the Great Heat which killed off the Dirtyleg Indians and Paul

Bunyan's Blue Ox. Near the end of that remarkable year, according to Bergstrom Stromberg, it began to rain and kept it up for the proverbial forty days and forty nights.

"But nary a drop of water hit the ground," said Bergstrom.

"Then what became of it?" I asked.

"Why, it turned into steam, of course. That there rain had no more chance of hittin' the ground than you have of spittin' into a blast furnace."

This steam, as Bergstrom tells it, cooled enough to turn into fog. The whole country was fogbound. It was so thick that people had to go around in pairs, one to hold the fog apart while the other walked through it. The pioneer ranchers didn't need to water their stock. The cattle would simply drink the fog. It looked funny to see pigs with their noses up in the air rooting for fish and frogs. But the dirt farmers were as mad as the stockmen were happy. The sun couldn't shine through the fog and the seeds didn't know which way was up. So they grew downward.

Things were getting pretty serious. All the farmers had just about decided to go to California when Febold came to their rescue. He hit upon the idea of importing some English fog-cutters from London. But the English were so slow that Febold didn't get his fog-cutters until Thanksgiving, and then the fog had turned to slush. He finally got to work and cut up the fog and slush into long strips which he laid along the roads so as not to spoil the fields. In course of time the dust covered up the roads and today you can hardly tell where Febold buried the Great Fog.

But many a rural mail carrier has cursed Febold and his English fog-cutters. For every spring when it rains or thaws, that old fog comes seeping up and makes rivers of mud out of all the country roads.

Living in the Country

It is a good thing to live in the country. To escape from the prison-walls of the metropolis—the greatest brickery we call “the city”—and to live amid blossoms and leaves, in shadow and sunshine, in moonlight and starlight, in rain, mist, dew, hoarfrost, and drouth, out in the open campaign, and under the blue dome that is bounded by the horizon only. It is a good thing to have a well with dripping buckets, a porch with honey-buds, and sweet-bells, a hive embroidered with nimble bees, a sundial mossed over, ivy up to the eaves, curtains of dimity, a tumbler of fresh flowers in your bedroom, a rooster on the roof, and a dog under the piazza.

When Mrs. Sparrowgrass and I moved into the country, with our heads full of fresh butter, and cool, crisp radishes for tea; with ideas entirely lucid respecting milk, and a looseness of calculation as to the number in family it would take a good laying hen to supply with fresh eggs every morning; when Mrs. Sparrowgrass and I moved into the country, we found some preconceived notions had to be abandoned, and some departures made from the plans we had laid down in the little back-parlor of Avenue G.

One of the first achievements in the country is early rising! with the lark—with the sun—while the dew is on the grass, “under the opening eyelids of the morn,” and so forth. Early rising! What can be done with five or six o’clock in town? What

From *The Sparrowgrass Papers*, by Frederick S. Cozzens.

may not be done at those hours in the country? With the hoe, the rake, the dibble, the spade, the watering-pot? To plant, prune, drill, transplant, graft, train, and sprinkle! Mrs. S. and I agreed to rise *early* in the country.

Richard and Robin were two pretty men,
They laid in bed till the clock struck ten:
Up jumped Richard and looked at the sky:
O Brother Robin! the sun's *very* high!

Early rising in the country is not an instinct; it is a sentiment, and must be cultivated.

A friend recommended me to send to the south side of Long Island for some very prolific potatoes—the real hippopotamus breed. Down went my man, and what, with expenses of horse-hire, tavern bills, toll-gates, and breaking a wagon, the hippopotami cost as much apiece as pine-apples. They were fine potatoes, though, with comely features, and large, languishing eyes, that promised increase of family without delay. As I worked my own garden (for which I hired a landscape gardener, at two dollars per day, to give me instructions), I concluded that the object of my first experiment in early rising should be the planting of the hippopotami. I accordingly rose next morning at five, and it rained! The next, and it rained! It rained for two weeks! We had splendid potatoes every day for dinner. "My dear," said I to Mrs. Sparrowgrass, "where did you get these fine potatoes?" "Why," said she, innocently, "out of that basket from Long Island!" The last of the hippopotami were before me, peeled, and boiled, and mashed and baked, with a nice thin brown crust on the top.

I was more successful afterwards. I did get some fine seed-potatoes in the ground. But something was the matter; at the end of the season, I did not get as many out as I had put in.

Mrs. Sparrowgrass, who is a notable housewife, said to me one day, "Now, my dear, we shall soon have plenty of eggs, for I have been buying a lot of young chickens." There they were, each one with as many feathers as a grasshopper, and a chirp not louder. Of course, we looked forward with pleasant hopes to the period when the first cackle should announce the milk-white egg, warmly deposited in the hay which we had provided bountifully.

They grew finely, and one day I ventured to remark that our hens had remarkably large combs, to which Mrs. S. replied, "Yes, indeed," she had observed that; "but if I wanted to have a real treat, I ought to get up early in the morning and hear them crow." "Crow!" said I, faintly, "our hens crowing! Then, by 'the cock that crowed in the morn, to wake the priest all shaven and shorn,' we might as well give up all hopes of having any eggs," said I; "for, as sure as you live, Mrs. S., our hens are all roosters!" And so they were roosters! they grew up and fought with the neighbors' chickens, until there was not a whole pair of eyes on either side of the fence.

A *dog* is a good thing to have in the country. I have one which I raised from a pup. He is a good, stout fellow, and a hearty barker and feeder. The man of whom I bought him said he was thoroughbred, but he begins to have a mongrel look about him. He is a good watch-dog, though; for the moment he sees any suspicious-looking person about the premises, he comes right into the kitchen and gets behind the stove. First, we kept him in the house, and he scratched all night to get out. Then we turned him out, and he scratched all night to get in. Then we tied him up at the back of the garden, and he howled so that our neighbor shot at him twice before daybreak. Finally, we gave him away, and he came back; and now he is just recovering from a fit, in which he has torn up the patch that has been sown for our spring radishes.

A good, strong gate is a necessary article for your garden. A good, strong, heavy gate, with a dislocated hinge, so that it will neither open nor shut. Such an one have I. The grounds before my fence are in common, and all the neighbors' cows pasture there. I remarked to Mrs. S., as we stood at the window in a June sunset, how placid and picturesque the cattle looked, as they strolled about, cropping the green herbage. Next morning, I found the innocent creatures in my garden. They had not left a green thing in it. The corn in the milk, the beans on the poles, the young cabbages, the tender lettuce, even the thriving shoots on my young fruit trees had vanished. And there they were, looking quietly on the ruin they had made. Our watch-dog, too, was foregathering with them. It was too much, so I got a large stick and drove them all out, except a young heifer, whom I

chased all over the flower-beds, breaking down my trellises, my woodbines and sweet-briers, my roses and petunias, until I cornered her in the hot-bed. I had to call for assistance to extricate her from the sashes, and her owner has sued me for damages. I believe I shall move in town.



Mrs. Sparrowgrass and I have concluded to try it once more; we are going to give the country another chance. After all, birds in the spring are lovely. First, come little snow-birds, *avant-couriers* of the feathered army; then, blue-birds, in national uniforms, just graduated, perhaps, from the ornithological corps of cadets, with high honors in the topographical class; then follows a detachment of flying artillery—swallows, sand-martens, sappers, and miners, begin their mines and countermines under the sandy parapets; then cedar birds, in trim jackets faced with yellow—aha, dragoons! And then the great rank and file of infantry, robins, wrens, sparrows, chipping-birds: and lastly—the band!

From nature's old cathedral sweetly ring
The wild bird choirs—burst of the woodland band,
—who mid the blossoms sing;
Their leafy temple, gloomy, tall, and grand,
Pillared with oaks, and roofed with Heaven's own hand.

There, there, that is Mario. Hear that magnificent chest note from the chestnuts! then a crescendo, falling in silence—*aplomb!*

Hush! he begins again with a low, liquid monotone, mounting by degrees and swelling into an infinitude of melody—the whole grove dilating, as it were, with exquisite epithalamium.

Silence now—and how still!

Hush! the musical monologue begins anew; up, up, into the tree-tops it mounts, fairly lifting the leaves with its passionate effluence, it trills through the upper branches—and then dripping down the listening foliage, in a cadenza of matchless beauty, subsides into silence again.

"That's a he cat-bird," says my carpenter.

A cat-bird? Then Shakspeare and Shelley have wasted powder upon the sky-lark; for never such "profuse strains of unpremedi-

tated art" issued from living bird before. Sky-lark! pooh! who would rise at dawn to hear the sky-lark, if a cat-bird were about, after breakfast?

I have bought me a boat. A boat is a good thing to have in the country, especially if there be any water near. There is a fine beach in front of my house. When visitors come, I usually propose to give them a row. I go down—and find the boat full of water; then I send to the house for a dipper; and prepare to bail; and, what with bailing and swabbing her with a mop, and plugging up the cracks in her sides, and struggling to get the rudder in its place, and unlocking the rusty padlock, my strength is so much exhausted that it is almost impossible for me to handle the oars. Meanwhile, the poor guests sit on stones around the beach, with woe-begone faces. "My dear," said Mrs. Sparrowgrass, "why don't you sell that boat?"

"Sell it? hal! hal!"

One day, a Quaker lady from Philadelphia paid us a visit. She was uncommonly dignified, and walked down to the water in the most stately manner, as is customary with Friends. It was just twilight, deepening into darkness, when I set about preparing the boat. Meanwhile our Friend seated herself upon *something* on the beach. While I was engaged in bailing, the wind shifted, and I became sensible of an unpleasant odor; afraid that our Friend would perceive it too, I whispered Mrs. Sparrowgrass to coax her off, and get her further up the beach.

"Thank thee, no, Susan, I feel a smell hereabout, and I am better where I am."

Mrs. S. came back, and whispered mysteriously, that our Friend was sitting on a dead dog, at which I redoubled the bailing, and got her out in deep water as soon as possible.

Dogs have a remarkable scent. A dead setter one morning found his way to our beach, and I towed him out in the middle of the river; but the faithful creature came back in less than an hour—that dog's smell was remarkable, indeed.

I have bought me a fyke! A fyke is a good thing to have in the country. A fyke is a fish-net, with long wings on each side; in shape like a night-cap with ear-lappets; in mechanism like a rat-trap. You put a stake at the tip end of the night-cap, a stake at each end of the outspread lappets; there are large hoops to

keep the night-cap distended, sinkers to keep the lower sides of the lappets under water, and floats, as large as muskmelons, to keep the upper sides above the water. The stupid fish come down stream, and rubbing their noses against the wings, follow the curve towards the fyke, and swim into the trap. When they get in they cannot get out. That is the philosophy of a fyke. I bought one of Conroy. "Now," said I to Mrs. Sparrowgrass, "we shall have fresh fish, to-morrow, for breakfast"; and went out to set it. I drove the stakes in the mud, spread the fyke in the boat, tied the end of one wing to the stake, and cast the whole into the water. The tide carried it out in a straight line. I got the loose end fastened to the boat, and found it impossible to row back against the tide with the fyke. I then untied it, and it went down stream, stake and all. I got it into the boat, rowed up, and set the stake again. Then I tied one end to the stake, and got out of the boat myself, in shoal water. Then the boat got away in deep water; then I had to swim for the boat. Then I rowed back and untied the fyke. Then the fyke got away. Then I jumped out of the boat to save the fyke, and the boat got away. Then I had to swim again after the boat, and row after the fyke, and finally was glad to get my net on dry land, where I left it for a week in the sun. Then I hired a man to set it, and he did; but he said it was "rotted." Nevertheless, in it I caught two small flounders and an eel. At last, a brace of Irishmen came down to my beach for a swim, at high tide. One of them, a stout, athletic fellow, after performing sundry aquatic gymnastics, dived under and disappeared for a fearful length of time. The truth is, he had dived into my net. After much turmoil in the water, he rose to the surface with the filaments hanging over his head, and cried out, as if he had found a bird's nest: "I say, Jimmy! be gorra, here's a foike?" That unfeeling exclamation to Jimmy, who was not the owner of the net, made me almost wish that it had not been "rotted."

We are worried about our cucumbers. Mrs. S. is fond of cucumbers, so I planted enough for ten families. The more they are picked, the faster they grow; and if you do not pick them, they turn yellow, and look ugly. Our neighbor has plenty, too. He sent us some one morning, by way of a present. What to do with them we did not know, with so many of our own. To give them

away was not polite; to throw them away was sinful; to eat them was impossible. Mrs. S. said, "Save them for seed." So we did. Next day, our neighbor sent us a dozen more. We thanked the messenger grimly, and took them in. Next morning, another dozen came. It was getting to be a serious matter; so I rose betimes the following morning, and when my neighbor's cucumbers came, I filled his man's basket with some of my own, by way of exchange. This bit of pleasantry was resented by my neighbor, who told his man to throw them to the hogs. His man told our girl, and our girl told Mrs. S., and, in consequence, all intimacy between the two families has ceased; the ladies do not speak, even at church.

We have another neighbor, whose name is Bates; he keeps cows. This year our gate has been fixed; but my young peach-trees, near the fences, are accessible from the road; and Bates' cows walk along that road, morning and evening. The sound of a cow bell is pleasant in the twilight. Sometimes, after dark, we hear the mysterious curfew tolling along the road, and then, with a louder peal, it stops before our fence, and again tolls itself off in the distance. The result is, my peach-trees are as bare as bean-poles. One day, I saw Mr. Bates walking along, and I hailed him; "Bates, those are your cows there, I believe." "Yes, sir—nice ones, ain't they?" "Yes," I replied, "they are *nice* ones. Do you see that tree there?"—and I pointed to a thrifty peach, with about as many leaves as an exploded sky-rocket. "Yes, sir." "Well, Bates, that red-and-white cow of yours, yonder, ate the top off that tree; I saw her do it." Then I thought I had made Bates ashamed of himself, and had wounded his feelings, perhaps too much. I was afraid he would offer me money for the tree, which I made up my mind to decline, at once. "Sparrowgrass," said he, "it don't hurt a tree a single mossel to chaw it, if it's a young tree. For my part, I'd rather have my young trees chawed than not. I think it makes 'em grow a leetle better. I can't do it with mine, but you can, because you can wait to have good trees, and the only way to have good trees is to have 'em chawed."

* * *

We have put a dumb waiter in our house. A dumb waiter is a good thing to have in the country, on account of its convenience.

If you have company, every thing can be sent up from the kitchen without any trouble, and, if the baby gets to be unbearable, on account of his teeth, you can dismiss the complainant by stuffing him in one of the shelves, and letting him down upon the help. To provide for contingencies, we had all our floors deafened. In consequence, you cannot hear any thing that is going on in the story below; and, when you are in the upper room of the house, there might be a democratic ratification meeting in the cellar, and you would not know it. Therefore, if any one should break into the basement, it would not disturb us; but to please Mrs. Sparrowgrass, I put stout iron bars in all the lower windows. Besides, Mrs. Sparrowgrass had bought a rattle when she was in Philadelphia; such a rattle as watchmen carry there. This is to alarm our neighbor, who, upon the signal, is to come to the rescue with his revolver. He is a rash man, prone to pull trigger first, and make inquiries afterwards.

One evening, Mrs. S. had retired, and I was busy writing, when it struck me a glass of ice-water would be palatable. So I took the candle and a pitcher, and went down to the pump. Our pump is in the kitchen. A country-pump, in the kitchen, is more convenient; but a well with buckets is certainly most picturesque. Unfortunately, our well water has not been sweet since it was cleaned out. First I had to open a bolted door that lets you into the basement-hall, and then I went to the kitchen-door, which proved to be locked. Then I remembered that our girl always carried the key to bed with her, and slept with it under her pillow. Then I retraced my steps; bolted the basement-door, and went up into the dining-room. As is always the case, I found, when I could not get any water, I was thirstier than I supposed I was. Then I thought I would wake our girl up. Then I concluded not to do it. Then I thought of the well, but I gave that up on account of its flavor. Then I opened the closet doors, there was no water there; and then I thought of the dumb waiter! The novelty of the idea made me smile; I took out two of the movable shelves, stood the pitcher on the bottom of the dumb waiter, got in myself with the lamp; let myself down, until I supposed I was within a foot of the floor below, and then let go!

We came down so suddenly, that I was shot out of the apparatus

as if it had been a catapult; it broke the pitcher, extinguished the lamp, and landed me in the middle of the kitchen at midnight, with no fire, and the air not much above the zero point. The truth is, I had miscalculated the distance of the descent—instead of falling one foot, I had fallen five. My first impulse was, to ascend by the way I came down, but I found that impracticable. Then I tried the kitchen door, it was locked; I tried to force it open; it was made of two-inch stuff, and held its own. Then I hoisted a window, and there were the rigid iron bars. If ever I felt angry at any body it was at myself, for putting up those bars to please Mrs. Sparrowgrass. I put them up, not to keep people in, but to keep people out.

I laid my cheek against the ice-cold barriers and looked out at the sky; not a star was visible; it was as black as ink overhead. Then I thought of Baron Trenck, and the prisoner of Chillon. Then I made a noise! I shouted until I was hoarse, and ruined our preserving-kettle with the poker. That brought our dogs out in full bark, and between us we made night hideous. Then I thought I heard a voice, and listened—it was Mrs. Sparrowgrass calling to me from the top of the staircase. I tried to make her hear me, but the infernal dogs united with howl, and growl, and bark, so as to drown my voice, which is naturally plaintive and tender. Besides, there were two bolted doors and double deafened floors between us; how could she recognize my voice, even if she did hear it? Mrs. Sparrowgrass called once or twice, and then got frightened; the next thing I heard was a sound as if the roof had fallen in, by which I understood that Mrs. Sparrowgrass was springing the rattle! That called out our neighbor, already wide awake; he came to the rescue with a bull-terrier, a Newfoundland pup, a lantern, and a revolver. The moment he saw me at the window, he shot at me, but fortunately just missed me. I threw myself under the kitchen table and ventured to expostulate with him, but he would not listen to reason. In the excitement I had forgotten his name, and that made matters worse. It was not until he had roused up every body around, broken in the basement door with an axe, gotten into the kitchen with his cursed savage dogs and shooting iron, and seized me by the collar, that he recognized me—and then, he wanted me to explain it! But what kind of an explanation

could I make to him? I told him he would have to wait until my mind was composed, and then I would let him understand the whole matter fully. But he never would have had the particulars from me, for I do not approve of neighbors that shoot at you, break in your door, and treat you, in your own house, as if you were a jail-bird. He knows all about it, however—some body has told him—*some body* tells every body every thing in our village.

Our Correspondent Has the Honour to be

WASHINGTON, D. C., MARCH 20, 1861.

JUDGE not by appearances, for appearances are very deceptive,—as the old lady cholerically remarked when one, who was really a virgin unto forty, blushinglly informed her that she was “just twenty-five this month.”

Though you find me in Washington now, I was born of respectable parents, and gave every indication, in my satchel and apron days, of coming to something better than this.

Slightly northward of the Connecticut river, where a pleasant little conservative village mediates between two opposition hills, you may behold the landscape on which my infantile New England eyes first traced the courses of future railroads.

Near the centre of this village in the valley, and a little back from its principal road, stood the residence of my worthy sire, and a very pretty residence it was. From the frequent addition of a new upper room here, a new dormer window there, and an innovating skylight elsewhere, the roof of the mansion had gradually assumed an alpine variety of juts and peaks somewhat confusing to behold. Local tradition related that, on a certain showery occasion, a streak of lightning was seen to descend upon that roof, skip vaguely about from one peak to another, and finally slink ignominiously down the water-pipe, as though utterly disgusted with its own inability to determine, where there were so many, which peak it should particularly perforate.

From *The Orpheus C. Kerr Papers*.

Such was the house in which I came to life a certain number of years ago, entering the world like a human exclamation point between two of the angriest sentences of a September storm, and adding materially to the uproar prevailing at the time.

Next to my parents, the person I can best remember, as I look back, was our family physician. A very obese man was he, with certain sweet-oiliness of manner, and never put out of patience. I think I can see him still, as he arose from his chair after a profound study of the case before him, and wrote a prescription so circumlocutory in its effect that it sent a servant half-a-mile to his friend the druggist for articles she might have found in her own kitchen, *aqua pumpaginis* and sugar being the sole ingredients required.

The doctor had started business in our village as a veterinary surgeon, but as the entire extent of his practice for six months in that line was a call to mend one of Colt's revolvers, he finally turned his attention to the ailings of his fellows, and wrought many cures with sugar and water latinised.

At first, my father did not patronise the new doctor, having very little faith in the efficacy of sugar and water, without the addition of certain other composites often seen in bottles; but the doctor's neat speech at a Sunday-school festival won his heart at last. The festival was held near a series of small water-falls just out of the village, and the doctor, who was an invited guest, was called upon for a few appropriate remarks. In compliance with the demand, he made a speech of some compass, ending with a peroration that is still quoted in my native place. He pointed impressively to the water-falls, and says he—

"All the works of nature is somewhat beautiful, with a good moral. Even them cataracts," says he sagely, "have a moral, and seems eternally whispering to the young, that 'those what err falls.'"

The effect of this happy illustration was very pleasing, my boy; especially with those who prefer morality to grammar; and after that the physician had the run of all the pious families—our own included.

It was a handsome compliment this worthy man paid me when I was about six months old. Having just received from my father the amount of his last bill, he was complacent to the last degree,

and felt inclined to do the handsome thing. He patted my head as I sat upon my mother's lap, and says he—

"How beautiful is babes! So small and yet so much like human beings, only not so large. This boy," says he fatly, looking down at me, "will make a noise in the world yet. He has a long head, a very long head."

"Do you think so?" says my father.

"Indeed I do," says the doctor. "The little fellow," says he in a sudden fit of abstraction, "has a long head, a very long head—and it's as thick as it is long."

There was some coolness between the doctor and my father after that, and on the following Sunday my mother refused to look at his wife's new bonnet in church.

So far as I can trace back, we never had a literary character in our family, save a venerable aunt of mine, on my mother's side, who commenced her writing career by refusing to contribute to the Sunday papers, and subsequently won much fame as the authoress of a set of copy-books. When this gifted relative found herself acquiring a reputation she came in state to visit us, and so disgusted my very practical father, by wearing slipshod gaiters, inking her right-hand thumb-nail every morning, calling all things by European names, and insisting upon giving our oldest plough-horse the romantic and literary title of "Lord Byron," that my exasperated parent incurred a most tremendous prejudice against authorship, and vowed, when she went away, that he never would invite her presence again.

I was only twenty years old at that time, and the novelty of my aunt's conduct had a rather infatuating effect upon me. With the perversity often observable in youngsters before they have seen much of the world, I became deeply interested in my literary relative as soon as my father began speaking contemptuously of her pursuits, and it took very little time to invest me with a longing and determination to be a writer.

Thenceforth I wore negligent linen; frequently rested my head upon the forefinger of my right hand, with a lofty and abstracted air; assumed an expression of settled and mysterious gloom when at church, and suffered my hair to grow long and uncombed.

My bearing during this period of infatuation could hardly fail

to attract considerable attention in our village, and there were two opinions about me. One was that I had been jilted; the other that I was likely to become a vagabond and an actor. My father inclined to the former, and left me, as he thought, to get over my disappointment in the natural way.

My peripatetic spell had lasted about six weeks, when I formed the acquaintance of the editor of the *Lily of the Valley*, who permitted me to mope in his office now and then, and soothed my literary inflammation by allowing me to write "puffs" for the village milliner.

While looking over some old magazines in the *Lily* office one day, I found in an ancient British periodical a raking article upon American literature, wherein the critic affirmed that all our writers were but weak imitators of English authors, and that such a thing as a Distinctly American Poem, *sui generis*, had not yet been produced.

This radical sneer at the United States of America fired my Yankee blood, and I vowed within myself to write a poem, not only distinctly American, but of such a character that only America could have produced it. In the solitude of my room, that night, I wooed the aboriginal muse, and two days thereafter the *Lily of the Valley* contained my distinctive American poem of

"THE AMERICAN TRAVELLER"

To Lake Aghmoogencgamook,
All in the State of Maine,
A man from Wittequergauma came
One evening in the rain.

"I am a traveller," said he,
"Just started on a tour,
And go to Nomjamskillicook
To-morrow morn at four."

He took a tavern bed that night,
And with the morrow's sun,
By way of Sekledobskus went,
With carpet-bag and gun.

A week passed on; and next we find
Our native tourist come,
To that sequestered village called
Genasagarnagum.

From thence he went to Absequoit,
And there—quite tired of Maine—
He sought the mountains of Vermont,
Upon a railroad train.

Dog Hollow, in the Green Mount State,
Was his first stopping-place,
And then Skunk's Misery displayed
Its sweetness and its grace.

By easy stages then he went
To visit Devil's Den;
And Scrabble Hollow, by the way
Did come within his ken.

Then, *via* Nine Holes and Goose Green,
He travelled through the State,
And to Virginia, finally,
Was guided by his fate.

Within the Old Dominion's bounds,
He wandered up and down,
To-day, at Buzzard Roost ensconced,
To-morrow at Hell Town.

At Pole Cat, too, he spent a week,
Till friends from Bull Ring came,
And made him spend the day with them
In hunting forest game.

Then with his carpet-bag in hand,
To Dog Town next he went;
Though stopping at Free Negro Town
Where half a day he spent.

From thence into Negationburg
His route of travel lay,
Which having gained, he left the State
And took a southard way.

North Carolina's friendly soil
He trod at fall of night,
And, on a bed of softest down,
He slept at Hell's Delight.

Morn found him on the road again,
To Slouchy Level bound;
At Bull's Tail, and Lick Lizzard, too,
Good provender he found.

But the plantations near Burnt Coat
Were even finer still,
And made the wondering tourist feel
A soft, delicious thrill.

At Tear Shirt, too, the scenery
Most charming did appear,
With Snatch It in the distance far,
And Purgatory near.

But spite of all these pleasant scenes
The tourist stoutly swore
That home is brightest after all,
And travel is a bore.

So back he went to Maine straightway
A little wife he took;
And now is making nutmegs at
Moosehicmagunticook.

In his note introductory of this poem the editor of the *Lily* affirmed that I had named none but veritable localities (which was strictly true), and ventured the belief that the composition would remind his readers of Goldsmith. Upon which his scor-

pion contemporary in the next village observed that there was rather more smith than gold about the poem.

Up to the time when this poem appeared in print, I had succeeded in concealing from my father the nature of my incidental occupation; but now he must know all.

He *did* know all; and the result was that he gave me ten dollars, and sent me to New York to look out for myself.

"It's the only thing that will save him," says he to my mother; "and I must either send him off or expect to see him sink by degrees to editorship and begin wearing disgraceful clothes."

I went to New York; I became private secretary and speech-scribe to an unscrupulous and, therefore, rising politician, and now I am in Washington.

I had a certain postmastership in my eye when I first came hither; but war's alarms indicate that I may do better as an amateur hero.

JOSH BILLINGS (HENRY WHEELER SHAW)

Laffing

ANATOMIKALLY konsidered, laffing iz the sensation ov pheeling good all over, and showing it principally in one spot.

Morally konsidered, it iz the next best thing tew the 10 commandments. . . .

Theoretikally konsidered, it kan out-argy all the logik in existence. . . .

Pyroteknikally konsidered, it is the fire-works of the soul. . . .

But i don't intend this essa for laffing in the lump, but for laffing on the half-shell.

Laffing iz just az natral tew cum tew the surface az a rat iz tew cum out ov hiz hole when he wants tew.

You kant keep it back by swallowing enny more than you kan the heckups.

If a man *kan't* laff there iz sum mistake made in putting him together, and if he *won't* laff he wants az mutch keeping away from az a bear-trap when it iz sot.

I have seen people who laffed altogether too mutch for their own good or for ennyboddy else's; they laft like a barrell ov nu sider with the tap pulled out, a perfekt stream.

This is a grate waste ov natral juice.

I have seen other people who didn't laff enuff tew giv themselves vent; they waz like a barrell ov nu sider too, that waz bunged up tite, apt tew start a hoop and leak all away on the sly.

This selection, and "The Muel," which follows, are both from *Josh Billings: His Works*, by Henry Wheeler Shaw.

Thare ain't neither ov theze 2 ways right, and they never ought tew be pattented. . . .

Genuine laffing iz the vent ov the soul, the nostrils of the heart, and iz just az necessary for health and happiness az spring water iz for a trout.

Thar iz one kind ov a laff that i always did rekommend; it looks out ov the eye fust with a merry twinkle, then it kleeps down on its hands and kneze and plays around the mouth like a pretty moth around the blaze ov a kandle, then it steals over into the dimples ov the cheeks and rides around into thozе little whirlpools for a while, then it lites up the whole face like the mello bloom on a damask roze, then it swims oph on the air with a peal az klear and az happy az a dinner-bell, then it goes bak agin on golden tiptoze like an angel out for an airing, and laze down on its little bed ov violets in the heart where it cum from.

Thare iz another laff that nobody kan withstand; it iz just az honest and noisy az a distrikt skool let out tew play, it shakes a man up from hiz toze tew hiz temples, it dubbles and twists him like a whiskee phit, it lifts him oph from his cheer, like feathers, and lets him bak agin like melted led, it goes all thru him like a pikpocket, and finally leaves him az weak and az krazy az tho he had bin soaking all day in a Rushing bath and forgot to be took out.

This kind ov a laff belongs tew jolly good phellows who are az healthy az quakers, and who are az easy tew please az a gall who iz going tew be married to-morrow.

In konklushion i say laff every good chance you kan git, but don't laff unless you feal like it, for there ain't nothing in this world more harty than a good honest laff, nor nothing more hollow than a hartless one.

When you do laff open yure mouth wide enuff for the noize tew git out without squealing, thro yure hed bak az tho you waz going tew be shaved, hold on tew yure false hair with both hands and then laff till yure soul gets thoroly rested.

But i shall tell yu more about theze things at sum fewter time.

The Muel

THE muel is haf hoss, and haf Jackass, and then kums tu a full stop, natur diskovering her mistake. Tha weigh more, akordin tu their heft, than enny other kreature, except a crowbar. Tha kant hear any quicker, nor further than the boss, yet their ears are big enuff for snow shoes. You kan trust them with enny one whose life aint wirth enny more than the muels. The only wa tu keep them into a paster, is tu turn them into a medder jineing and let them jump out. Tha are reddy for use, just as soon as they will du tu abuse. Tha haint got enny friends, and will live on huckel berry brush, with an ockasional chanse at Kanada thissels. Tha are a modern invenshun, I don't think the Bible deludes to them at tall. Tha sel for more money than enny other domestik animile. Yu kant tell their age by looking into their mouth, enny more than you kould a Mexican cannons.

Tha never hav no disease that a good club wont heal. If tha ever die tha must kum tu life agin, for I never heard nobody sa "Ded muel." Tha are like some men, very korrupt at harte; I've known them tu be good muels for 6 months, just tu git a good chance to kick sumbody. I never owned one, nor even mean to, unless there is a United States law passcd, requiring it. The only reason why tha are pashunt, is bekause tha are ashamed ov themselves. I have seen eddikated muels in a sirkus. Tha could kick, and bite, tremcnjis. I would not sa what I am forced tu sa agin the muel, if his birth want an outrage and man want tu blame for it. Enny man who is willing tu drive a muel ought to be exempt by law from running for the legislatur. Tha are the strongest creetures on earth, and heaviest, ackording tu their size; I herd tell ov one who fell oph the tow path, on the Eri kanawl, and sunk as soon as he touched bottom, but he kept rite on towing the boat tu the nex stashun, breathing thru his ears, which stuck out ov the water about 2 feet 6 inches; I didn't see this did, but an auctioneer told me ov it, and I never knew an auctioneer tu lie unless it was absolutely convenient.

The Hoosier and the Salt Pile

"I'M SORRY," said Dan, as he knocked the ashes from his regalia, as he sat in a small crowd over a glass of sherry, at Florence's, New York, one evening,—“I'm sorry that the stages are disappearing so rapidly. I never enjoyed traveling so well as in the slow coaches. I've made a good many passages over the Alleghanies, and across Ohio, from Cleveland to Columbus and Cincinnati, all over the South, down East, and up North, in stages, and I generally had a good time.

“When I passed over from Cleveland to Cincinnati, the last time, in a stage, I met a queer crowd. Such a corps, such a time, you never did see. I never was better amused in my life. We had a good team,—spanking horses, fine coaches, and one of them drivers you read of. Well, there was nine ‘insiders,’ and I don't believe there ever was a stage full of Christians ever started before, so chuck full of music.

“There was a beautiful young lady going to one of the Cincinnati academies; next to her sat a Jew peddler,—Coves and a market; wedging him was a dandy black-leg, with jewelry and chains around about his breast and neck enough to hang him. There was myself, and an old gentleman with large spectacles, a gold-headed cane, and a jolly, soldering iron-looking nose; by him was a circus-rider, whose breath was enough to breed yaller fever and could be felt just as easy as cotton velvet! A cross old woman came next, whose look would have given any reasonable

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man the double-breasted blues before breakfast; alongside of her was a rale backwoods preacher, with the biggest and ugliest mouth ever got up since the flood. He was flanked by the low comedian of the party, an Indiana Hoosier, 'gwine down to Orleans to get an army contrac' to supply the forces, then in Mexico, with beef.

"We rolled along for some time. Nobody seemed inclined to 'open.' The old aunty sat bolt upright, looking crab-apples and persimmons at the hoosier and the preacher; the young lady dropped the green curtain of her bonnet over her pretty face, and leaned back in her seat to nod and dream over japonicas and jumbles, pantalets and poetry; the old gentleman, proprietor of the Bardolph nose, looked out at the corduroy and swashes; the gambler fell off into a doze, and the circus convoy followed suit, leaving the preacher and me *vis-à-vis* and saying nothing to nobody. 'Indiany,' he stuck his mug out of the window and criticized the cattle we now and then passed. I was wishing somebody would give the conversation a start, when 'Indiany' made a break.

" 'This ain't no great stock country,' says he to the old gentleman with the cane.

" 'No, sir,' says the old gentleman. 'There's very little grazing here, and the range is pretty much wore out.'

"Then there was nothing said again for some time. Bimeboy the hoosier opened ag'in:

" 'It's the d—dest place for 'sommen-trees and turkey-buzzards I ever did seel'

"The old gentleman with the cane didn't say nothing, and the preacher gave a long groan. The young lady smiled through her veil, and the old lady snapped her eyes and looked sideways at the speaker.

" 'Don't make much beef here, I reckon,' says the hoosier.

" 'No,' says the gentleman.

" 'Well, I don't see how in h-ll they all manage to get along in a country whar thar ain't no ranges and they don't make no beef. A man ain't considered worth a cuss in Indiany what hasn't got his brand on a hundred head.'

" 'Yours is a great beef country, I believe,' says the old gentleman.

" 'Well, sir, it ain't anything else. A man that's got sense enuff

to foller his own cow-bell with us ain't in no danger of starvin'. I'm gwine down to Orleans to see if I can't git a contract out of Uncle Sam to feed the boys what's been lickin' them infernal Mexicans so bad. I s'pose you've seed them cussed lies what's been in the papers about the Indiany boys at Bony Visty.'

" 'I've read some accounts of the battle,' says the old gentleman, 'that didn't give a very flattering account of the conduct of some of our troops.'

"With that, the Indiany man went into a full explanation of the affair, and, gettin' warmed up as he went along, begun to cuss and swear like he'd been through a dozen campaigns himself. The old preacher listened to him with evident signs of displeasure, twistin' and groanin' till he couldn't stand it no longer.

" 'My friend,' says he, 'you must excuse me, but your conversation would be a great deal more interesting to me—and I'm sure would please the company much better—if you wouldn't swear so terribly. It's very wrong to swear, and I hope you'll have respect for our feelin's, if you hain't no respect for your Maker.'

"If the hoosier had been struck with thunder and lightnin', he couldn't have been more completely tuck aback. He shut his mouth right in the middle of what he was sayin', and looked at the preacher, while his face got as red as fire.

" 'Swearin',' says the old preacher, 'is a terrible bad practice, and there ain't no use in it, nohow. The Bible says, Swear not at all, and I s'pose you know the commandments about swearin'?'

"The old lady sort of brightened up,—the preacher was her 'duck of a man'; the old fellow with the nose and cane let off a few 'umph, ah! umphs'; but 'Indiany' kept shady; he appeared to be cowed down.

" 'I know,' says the preacher, 'that a great many people swear without thinkin', and some people don't b'lieve the Bible.'

"And then he went on to preach a regular sermon ag'in swearin', and to quote Scripture like he had the whole Bible by heart. In the course of his argument he undertook to prove the Scriptures to be true, and told us all about the miracles and prophecies and their fulfilment. The old gentleman with the cane took a part in the conversation, and the hoosier listened, without ever opening his head.

" 'I've just heard of a gentleman,' says the preacher, 'that's been

to the Holy Land and went over the Bible country. It's astonishin' to hear what wonderful things he has seen. He was at Sodom and Gomorrow, and seen the place whar Lot's wife fell.'

"'Ahl' says the old gentleman with the cane.

"'Yes,' says the preacher; 'he went to the very spot; and, what's the remarkablest thing of all, he seen the pillar of salt what she was turned into.'

"'Is it possible!' says the old gentleman.

"'Yes, sir; he seen the salt, standin' thar to this day.'

"'What!' says the hoosier, 'real genewine, good salt?'

"'Yes, sir, a pillar of salt, jest as it was when that wicked woman was punished for her disobedience.'

"All but the gambler, who was snoozing in the corner of the coach, looked at the preacher,—the hoosier with an expression of countenance that plainly told us that his mind was powerfully convicted of an important fact.

"'Right out in the open air?' he asked.

"'Yes, standin' right in the open field, whar she fell.'

"'Well, sir,' says 'Indianny,' 'all I've got to say is, if she'd dropped in our parts, the cattle would have licked her up afore sundown!'

"The preacher raised both his hands at such an irreverent remark, and the old gentleman laughed himself into a fit of asthmatics, what he didn't get over till we came to the next change of horses. The hoosier had played the mischief with the gravity of the whole party; even the old maid had to put her handkerchief to her face, and the young lady's eyes were filled with tears for half an hour afterward. The old preacher hadn't another word to say on the subject; but whenever we came to any place, or met anybody on the road, the circus-man nursed the thing along by asking what was the price of salt."

Fable

The mountain and the squirrel
Had a quarrel,
And the former called the latter "Little Prig";
Bun replied,
"You are doubtless very big;
But all sorts of things and weather
Must be taken in together,
To make up a year
And a sphere,
And I think it no disgrace
To occupy my place.
If I'm not so large as you,
You are not so small as I,
And not half so spry.
I'll not deny you make
A very pretty squirrel track;
Talents differ; all is well and wisely put;
If I can not carry forests on my back,
Neither can you crack a nut."

From *Poems*, by Ralph Waldo Emerson; reprinted by permission of Houghton Mifflin Company.

The Chief Mate

MY FIRST glimpse of Europe was the shore of Spain. Since we got into the Mediterranean, we have been becalmed for some days within easy view of it. All along are fine mountains, brown all day, and with a bloom on them at sunset like that of a ripe plum. Here and there at their feet little white towns are sprinkled along the edge of the water, like the grains of rice dropped by the princess in the story. Sometimes we see larger buildings on the mountain slopes, probably convents. I sit and wonder whether the farther peaks may not be the Sierra Morena (the rusty saw) of Don Quixote. I resolve that they shall be, and am content. Surely latitude and longitude never showed me any particular respect, that I should be over-scrupulous with them.

But after all, Nature, though she may be more beautiful, is nowhere so entertaining as in man, and the best thing I have seen and learned at sea is our Chief Mate. My first acquaintance with him was made over my knife, which he asked to look at, and, after a critical examination, handed back to me, saying, "I shouldn't wonder if that 'ere was a good piece o' stuff." Since then he has transferred a part of his regard for my knife to its owner. I like folks who like an honest bit of steel, and take no interest whatever in "your Raphaels, Correggios, and stuff." There is always more than the average human nature in the man

This selection is from *Fireside Travels*, by James Russell Lowell; "What Mr. Robinson Thinks," which follows, is from *Poems*, by James Russell Lowell. Both selections are reprinted by permission of Houghton Mifflin Company.

who has a hearty sympathy with iron. It is a manly metal, with no sordid associations like gold and silver. My sailor fully came up to my expectations on further acquaintance. He might well be called an old salt who had been wrecked on Spitzbergen before I was born. He was not an American, but I should never have guessed it by his speech, which was the purest Cape Cod, and I reckon myself a good taster of dialects. Nor was he less Americanized in all his thoughts and feelings, a singular proof of the ease with which our omnivorous country assimilates foreign matter, provided it be Protestant, for he was a man ere he became an American citizen. He used to walk the deck with his hands in his pockets, in seeming abstraction, but nothing escaped his eyes. *How* he saw I could never make out, though I had a theory that it was with his elbows. After he had taken me (or my knife) into his confidence, he took care that I should see whatever he deemed of interest to a landsman. Without looking up, he would say, suddenly, "There's a whale blowin' clearn up to win'ard," or, "Them's porpises to leeward: that means change o' wind." He is as impervious to cold as a polar bear, and paces the deck during his watch much as one of those yellow hummocks goes slumping up and down his cage. On the Atlantic, if the wind blew a gale from the northeast, and it was cold as an English summer, he was sure to turn out in a calico shirt and trousers, his furzy brown chest half bare, and slippers, without stockings. But lest you might fancy this to have chanced by defect of wardrobe, he comes out in a monstrous pea-jacket here in the Mediterranean, when the evening is so hot that Adam would have been glad to leave off his fig-leaves. "It's a kind o' damp and unwholesome in these 'ere waters," he says, evidently regarding the Midland Sea as a vile standing pool, in comparison with the bluff ocean. At meals he is superb, not only for his strengths, but his weaknesses. He has somehow or other come to think me a wag, and if I ask him to pass the butter, detects an occult joke, and laughs as much as is proper for a mate. For you must know that our social hierarchy on shipboard is precise, and the second mate, were he present, would only laugh half as much as the first. Mr. X. always combs his hair, and works himself into a black frock-coat (on Sundays he adds a waist-coat) before he comes to meals, sacrificing himself nobly and painfully to the social proprieties.

The second mate, on the other hand, who eats after us, enjoys the privilege of shirt-sleeves, and is, I think, the happier man of the two. We do not have seats above and below the salt, as in old time, but above and below the white sugar. Mr. X. always takes brown sugar, and it is delightful to see how he ignores the existence of certain delicacies which he considers above his grade, tipping his head on one side with an air of abstraction so that he may seem not to deny himself, but to omit helping himself from inadvertence, or absence of mind. At such times he wrinkles his forehead in a peculiar manner, inscrutable at first as a cuneiform inscription, but as easily read after you once get the key. The sense of it is something like this: "I, X., know my place, a height of wisdom attained by few. Whatever you may think, I do *not* see that currant jelly, nor that preserved grape. Especially a kind Providence has made me blind to bowls of white sugar, and deaf to the pop of champagne corks. It is much that a merciful compensation gives me a sense of the dingier hue of Havana, and the muddier gurgle of beer. Are there potted meats? My physician has ordered me three pounds of minced salt-junk at every meal." There is such a thing, you know, as a ship's husband: X. is the ship's poor relation.

As I have said, he takes also a below-the-white-sugar interest in the jokes, laughing by precise point of compass, just as he would lay the ship's course, all *yawing* being out of the question with his scrupulous decorum at the helm. Once or twice I have got the better of him, and touched him off into a kind of compromised explosion, like that of damp fireworks, that splutter and simmer a little, and then go out with painful slowness and occasional relapses. But his fuse is always of the unwillingest, and you must blow your match, and touch him off again and again with the same joke. Or rather, you must magnetize him many times to get him *en rapport* with a jest. This once accomplished, you have him, and one bit of fun will last the whole voyage. He prefers those of one syllable, the *a-b abs* of humor. The gradual fattening of the steward, a benevolent mulatto with whiskers and ear-rings, who looks as if he had been meant for a woman, and had become a man by accident, as in some of those stories by the elder physiologists, is an abiding topic of humorous comment with Mr. X. "That 'ere stooard," he says, with a brown

grin like what you might fancy on the face of a serious and aged seal, "'s agittin' as fat's a porpis. He was as thin's a shingle when he come aboard last v'ye. Them trousis'll bust yit. He don't darst take 'em off nights, for the whole ship's company couldn't git him into 'em agin.'" And then he turns aside to enjoy the intensity of his emotion by himself, and you hear at intervals low rumblings, an indigestion of laughter. He tells me of St. Elmo's fires, Marvell's *corposants*, though with him the original *corpos santos* has suffered a sea change, and turned to *come-pleasants*, pledges of fine weather. I shall not soon find a pleasanter companion. It is so delightful to meet a man who knows just what you do *not*. Nay, I think the tired mind finds something in plump ignorance like what the body feels in cushiony moss. Talk of the sympathy of kindred pursuits! It is the sympathy of the upper and nether millstones, both forever grinding the same grist, and wearing each other smooth. One has not far to seek for book-nature, artist-nature, every variety of superinduced nature, in short, but genuine human-nature is hard to find. And how good it is! Wholesome as a potato, fit company for any dish. The free masonry of cultivated men is agreeable, but artificial, and I like better the natural grip with which manhood recognizes manhood.

X. has one good story, and with that I leave him, wishing him with all my heart that little inland farm at last which is his calenture as he paces the windy deck. One evening, when the clouds looked wild and whirling, I asked X. if it was coming on to blow. "No, I guess not," said he; "bumby the moon'll be up, and scoff away that 'ere loose stuff." His intonation set the phrase "scoff away" in quotation-marks as plain as print. So I put a query in each eye, and he went on. "Ther' was a Dutch cappen onct, an' his mate come to him in the cabin, where he sot takin' his schnapps, an' says, 'Cappen, it's agittin' thick, an' looks kin' o' squally, hedn't we's good's shorten sail?' 'Gimmy my alminick,' says the cappen. So he looks at it a spell, an' says he, 'The moon's due in less'n half an hour, an' she'll scoff away ev'ythin' clare agin.' So the mate he goes, an' bumby down he comes agin, an' says, 'Cappen, this 'ere's the allfireddest, powerfulest moon 't ever you *did* see. She's scoffed away the maintogallants'l, an' she's to work on the foretops'l now. Guess you'd better look in the almin-

ick agin, and fin' out when *this* moon sets.' So the cappen thought 't was 'bout time to go on deck. Dreadful slow them Dutch cap-pens be." And X. walked away, rumbling inwardly, like the rote of the sea heard afar.

What Mr. Robinson Thinks

Govener B. is a sensible man;

He stays to his home an' looks arter his folks;

He draws his furrer ez straight ez he can,

An' into nobody's tater-patch pokes;

But John P.

Robinson he

Sez he wunt vote fer Govener B.

My! ain't it terrible? Wut shall we du?

We can't never choose him, o' course,—thet's flat;

Guess we shall hev to come round (don't you?)

An' go in fer thunder an' guns, an' all that;

Fer John P.

Robinson he

Sez he wunt vote fer Govcner B.

Gineral C. is a drefle smart man:

He's ben on all sides thet give places or pelf;

But consistency still was a part of his plan,—

He's ben true to *one* party,—an' thet is himself;—

So John P.

Robinson he

Sez he shall vote fer Gineral C.

Gineral C. he goes in fer the war;

He don't vally principle more'n an old cud;

Wut did God make us raytional creeturs fer,
But glory an' gunpowder, plunder an' blood?
So John P.
Robinson he
Sez he shall vote fer Ginerall C.

We were gettin' on nicely up here to our village,
With good old idees o' wut's right an' wut ain't,
We kind o' thought Christ went agin war an' pillage,
An' thet eppyletts worn't the best mark of a saint;
But John P.
Robinson he
Sez this kind o' thing's an exploded idee.

The side of our country must ollers be took,
An' presidunt Polk, you know, *he* is our country,
An' the angel thet writes all our sins in a book
Puts the *debit* to him, an' to us the *per contry*;
An' John P.
Robinson he
Sez this is his view o' the thing to a T.

Parson Wilbur he calls all these argimunts lies;
Sez they're nothin' on airth but jest *fee, faw, fum*;
An' thet all this big talk of our destinies
Is half on it ign'ance, an't other half rum;
But John P.
Robinson he
Sez it ain't no sech thing; an', of course, so must we.

Parson Wilbur sez *he* never heerd in his life
Thet th' Apostles rigged out in their swaller-tail coats,
An' marched round in front of a drum an' a fife,
To git some on 'em office, an' some on 'em votes;
But John P.
Robinson he
Sez they didn't know everythin' down in Judee.

Wall, it's a marcy we've gut folks to tell us
The rights an' the wrongs o' these matters, I vow,—
God sends country lawyers, an' other wise fellers,
To start the world's team wen' it gits in a slouch;
 Fer John P.
 Robinson he
Sez the world'll go right, ef he hollers out Geel

NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE

The British Matron

I HAVE heard a good deal of the tenacity with which English ladies retain their personal beauty to a late period of life; but (not to suggest that an American eye needs use and cultivation, before it can quite appreciate the charm of English beauty at any age) it strikes me that an English lady of fifty is apt to become a creature less refined and delicate, so far as her physique goes, than anything that we Western people class under the name of woman. She has an awful ponderosity of frame, not pulpy, like the looser development of our few fat women, but massive with solid beef and streaky tallow; so that (though struggling manfully against the idea) you inevitably think of her as made up of steaks and sirloins. When she walks, her advance is elephantine. When she sits down it is on a great round space of her Maker's footstool, where she looks as if nothing could ever move her. She imposes awe and respect by the muchness of her personality, to such a degree that you probably credit her with far greater moral and intellectual force than she can fairly claim. Her visage is usually grim and stern, seldom positively forbidding, yet calmly terrible, not merely by its breadth and weight of feature, but because it seems to express so much well-defined self-reliance, such acquaintance with the world, its toils, troubles, and dangers, and such sturdy capacity for trampling down a foe. Without anything positively salient, or actively offensive, or,

From *Our Old Home*, by Nathaniel Hawthorne; reprinted by permission of Houghton Mifflin Company.

indeed, unjustly formidable to her neighbors, she has the effect of a seventy-four-gun ship in time of peace; for, while you assure yourself that there is no real danger, you can not help thinking how tremendous would be her onset, if pugnaciously inclined, and how futile the effort to inflict any counter-injury. She certainly looks tenfold—nay, a hundredfold—better able to take care of herself than our slender-framed and haggard womankind; but I have not found reason to suppose that the English dowager of fifty has actually greater courage, fortitude, and strength of character than our women of similar age, or even a tougher physical endurance than they. Morally, she is strong, I suspect, only in society, and in the common routine of social affairs, and would be found powerless and timid in any exceptional strait that might call for energy outside of the conventionalities amid which she has grown up.

You can meet this figure in the street, and live, and even smile at the recollection. But conceive of her in a ball-room, with the bare, brawny arms that she invariably displays there, and all the other corresponding development, such as is beautiful in the maiden blossom, but a spectacle to howl at in such an over-blown cabbage-rose as this.

Yet, somewhere in this enormous bulk there must be hidden the modest, slender, violet-nature of a girl, whom an alien mass of earthliness has unkindly overgrown; for an English maiden in her teens, though very seldom so pretty as our own damsels, possesses, to say the truth, a certain charm of half-blossom, and delicately folded leaves, and tender womanhood, shielded by maidenly reserves, with which, somehow or other, our American girls often fail to adorn themselves during an appreciable moment. It is a pity that the English violet should grow into such an outrageously developed peony as I have attempted to describe. I wonder whether a middle-aged husband ought to be considered as legally married to all the accretions that have overgrown the slenderness of his bride, since he led her to the altar, and which make her so much more than he ever bargained for! Is it not a sounder view of the case, that the matrimonial bond can not be held to include the three-fourths of the wife that had no existence when the ceremony was performed? And as a matter of conscience and good morals, ought not an English

married pair to insist upon the celebration of a silver wedding at the end of twenty-five years in order to legalize and mutually appropriate that corporeal growth of which both parties have individually come into possession since they were pronounced one flesh?

The Deacon's Trout

HE WAS a curious trout. I believe he knew Sunday just as well as Deacon Marble did. At any rate, the deacon thought the trout meant to aggravate him. The deacon, you know, is a little wag-gish. He often tells about that trout. Sez he, "One Sunday morn-ing, just as I got along by the willows, I heard an awful splash, and not ten feet from shore I saw the trout, as long as my arm, just curving over like a bow, and going down with something for breakfast. 'Gracious!' says I, and I almost jumped out of the wagon. But my wife Polly, says she, 'What on airth are you thinkin' of, Deacon? It's Sabbath day, and you're goin' to meetin'! It's a pretty business for a deacon!' That sort o' cooled me off. But I do say that, for about a minute, I wished I wasn't a deacon. But 't wouldn't made any difference, for I came down next day to mill on purpose, and I came down once or twice more, and nothin' was to be seen, tho' I tried him with the most temptin' things. Wal, next Sunday I came along ag'in, and, to save my life I couldn't keep off worldly and wanderin' thoughts. I tried to be sayin' my catechism, but I couldn't keep my eyes off the pond as we came up to the willows. I'd got along in the catechism, as smooth as the road, to the Fourth Commandment, and was sayin' it out loud for Polly, and jist as I was sayin: '*What is re-quired in the Fourth Commandment?*' I heard a splash, and there was the trout, and afore I could think, I said: 'Gracious, Polly, I must have that trout.' She almost riz right up, 'I knew

From *Norwood*, by Henry Ward Beecher.

you wa'n't sayin' your catechism hearty. Is this the way you answer the question about keepin' the Lord's day? I'm ashamed, Deacon Marble,' says she. 'You'd better change your road, and go to meetin' on the road over the hill. If I was a deacon, I wouldn't let a fish's tail whisk the whole catechism out of my head'; and I had to go to meetin' on the hill road all the rest of the summer."

Aphorisms

WE KNOW but a few men, a great many coats and breeches.

To be awake is to be alive. I have never yet met a man who was quite awake. How could I have looked him in the face?

I have found that no exertion of the legs can bring two minds much nearer to one another.

A man sits as many risks as he runs.

There are nowadays professors of philosophy, but not philosophers.

If you give money, spend yourself with it.

Sometimes we are inclined to class those who are once-and-a-half witted with the half-witted, because we appreciate only a third part of their wit.

From *The Writings of Henry David Thoreau*; reprinted by permission of Houghton Mifflin Company.

My First Appearance at the Bar

I STARTED, as I thought, in pretty good style. As I went on, however, my fancy began to get the better of my judgment. Argument and common sense grew tame. Poetry and declamation, and, at last, pathos and fiery invective, took their place. I grew as *quotations* as Richard Swiveller. Shakespere suffered. I quoted, among other things of less value and aptness, "He who steals my purse steals trash," etc. I spoke of the woful sufferings of my poor client, almost heart-broken beneath the weight of the terrible persecutions of his enemy: and, growing bolder, I turned on old Kasm, and congratulated the jury that the genius of slander had found an appropriate defender in the genius of chicane and malignity. I complimented the jury on their patience—on their intelligence—on their estimate of the value of character; spoke of the public expectation—of that feeling outside of the box which would welcome with thundering plaudits the righteous verdict the jury would render; and wound up by declaring that I had never known a case of slander so aggravated in the course of my practice at that bar; and felicitated myself that its grossness and barbarity justified my client in relying upon even the youth and inexperience of an unpractised advocate, whose poverty of resources was unaided by opportunities of previous preparation. Much more I said that happily has now escaped me.

When I concluded, Sam Hicks and one or two other friends
From *The Flush Times of Alabama and Mississippi*, by Joseph G. Baldwin.

gave a faint sign of applause—but not enough to make any impression.

I observed that old Kasm held his head down when I was speaking. I entertained the hope that I had cowed him! His usual port was that of cynical composure, or bold and brazen defiance. It was a special kindness if he only smiled in covert scorn: that was his most amiable expression in a trial.

But when he raised up his head I saw the very devil was to pay. His face was of a burning red. He seemed almost to choke with rage. His eyes were bloodshot and flamed out fire and fury. His queue stuck out behind, and shook itself stiffly like a buffalo bull's tail when he is about making a fatal plunge. I had struck him between wind and water. There was an audacity in a strippling like me bearding him, which infuriated him. He meant to massacre me—and wanted to be a long time doing it. It was to be a regular *auto da fé*. I was to be representative of the young bar, and to expiate his malice against all. The court adjourned for dinner. It met again after an hour's recess.

By this time, the public interest, and especially that of the bar, grew very great. There was a rush to the privileged seats, and the sheriff had to command order,—the shuffling of feet and the pressure of the crowd forward was so great.

I took my seat within the bar, looked around with an affectation of indifference so belying the perturbation within, that the same power of acting on the stage would have made my fortune on *that* theatre.

Kasm rose—took a glass of water: his hand trembled a little—I could see that; took a pinch of snuff, and let off in a voice slow and measured, but slightly—very slightly—tremulous. By a strong effort, he had recovered his composure. The bar was surprised at his calmness. They all knew it was affected; but they wondered that he *could* affect it. Nobody was deceived by it. We felt assured "it was the torrent's smoothness ere it dash below." I thought he would come down on me in a tempest, and flattered myself it would soon be over. But malice is cunning. He had no idea of letting me off so easily.

He commenced by saying that he had been some years in the practice. He would not say he was an old man: that would be in bad taste, perhaps. The young gentleman who had just closed

his remarkable speech, harangue, poetic effusion, or rigmarole, or whatever it might be called, if, indeed, any name could be safely given to this motely mixture of incongruous slang—the young gentleman evidently did not think he was an old man; for he could hardly have been guilty of such rank indecency as to have treated age with such disrespect—he would not say with such insufferable impertinence: and yet, “I am,” he continued, “of age enough to recollect, if I had charged my memory with so inconsiderable an event, the day of *his* birth, and then I was in full practice in this courthouse. I confess, though, gentlemen, I *am old* enough to remember the period when a youth’s first appearance at the bar was not signalized by impertinence towards his seniors; and when public opinion did not think flatulent bombast and florid trash, picked out of fifth-rate romances and namby-pamby rhymes, redeemed by the upstart sauciness of a raw popinjay, towards the experienced members of the profession he disgraced. And yet, to some extent, this ranting youth may be right; I am not old in that sense which disables me from defending myself *here* by words, or *elsewhere*, if need be, by blows: and that, this young gentleman shall right well know before I have done with him. You will bear in mind, gentlemen, that what I say is in self-defence—that I did not begin this quarrel—that it was forced on me; and that I am bound by no restraints of courtesy, or of respect, or of kindness. Let him charge to the account of his own rashness and rudeness, whatever he received in return therefor.

“Let me retort on this youth that he is a worthy advocate of his butcher client. He fights with the dirty weapons of his barbarous trade, and brings into his speech the reeking odor of his client’s slaughter-house.

“Perhaps something of this congeniality commended him to the notice of his worthy client, and to this, his first retainer: and no wonder, for when we heard his vehement roaring, we might have supposed his client had brought his most unruly bull-calf into court to defend him, had not the matter of the roaring soon convinced us the animal was more remarkable for the length of his ears, than even the power of his lungs. Perhaps the young gentleman has taken his retainer, and contracted for butchering my client on the same terms as his client contracts in his line—

that is, on the shares. But I think, gentlemen, he will find the contract a more dirty than profitable job. Or, perhaps, it might not be uncharitable to suggest that his client, who seems to be pretty well up to the business of *saving other people's bacon*, may have desired, as far as possible, to save his own; and, therefore turning from members of the bar who would have charged him for their services according to their value, took this occasion of getting off some of his stale wares; for has not Shakespere said — (the gentleman will allow me to quote Shakespere, too, while yet his reputation survives *his* barbarous mouthing of the poet's words) — he knew an attorney 'who would defend a cause for a starved hen, or leg of mutton fly-blown.' I trust, however, whatever was the contract, that the gentleman will make his equally worthy client stand up to it; for I should like, that on one occasion it might be said the excellent butcher *was made to pay for his swine*.

"I find it difficult, gentlemen, to reply to any part of the young man's effort, except his argument, which is the smallest part in compass, and, next to his pathos, the most amusing. His figures of speech are some of them quite good, and have been so considered by the best judges for the last thousand years. I must confess, that as to these, I find no other fault than that they were badly applied and ridiculously pronounced; and this further fault, that they have become so common-place by constant use, that, unless some new vamping or felicity of application be given them, they tire nearly as much as his original matter—*videlicet*, that matter which, being more ridiculous than we ever heard before, carries internal evidence of its being his own. Indeed, it was never hard to tell when the gentleman recurred to his own ideas. He is like a cat-bird—the only intolerable discord she makes being her own notes—though she gets on well enough as long as she copies and cobbles the songs of other warblers.

"But, gentlemen, if this young orator's argument was amusing, what shall I say of his pathos? What farce ever equalled the fun of it? The play of 'The Liar' probably approaches nearest to it, not only in the humor, but in the veracious character of the incidents from which the humor comes. Such a face—so woebe-gone, so whimpering, as if the short period since he was flogged at school (probably in reference to those eggs falsely charged

to the hound puppy) had neither obliterated the resemblance of his juvenile affliction, nor the looks he bore when he endured it.

"There was something exquisite in his picture of the woes, the wasting grief of his disconsolate client, the butcher Higginbotham, mourning—as Rachel mourned for her children—for his character *because it was not*. Gentlemen, look at him! Why he weighs twelve stone *now*! He has three inches of fat on his ribs this minute! He would make as many links of sausage as any hog that ever squealed at midnight in his slaughter pen, and has lard enough in him to cook it all. Look at his face! why, his chops remind a hungry man of jowls and greens. If this is a shadow, in the name of propriety, why didn't he show himself, when in flesh, at the last fair, beside the Kentucky ox; that were a more honest way of making a living than stealing hogs. But Hig is pining in grief! I wonder the poetic youth—his learned counsel—did not quote the Shakspeare again. 'He never told his'—woe—'but let concealment, like the worm i' the bud, prey on his damask cheek.' He looked like Patience on a monument smiling at grief—or beef, I should rather say. But, gentlemen, probably I am wrong; it may be that this tender-hearted, sensitive butcher, was lean before, and like Falstaff, throws the blame of his fat on sorrow and sighing, which 'has puffed him up like a bladder.'" (Here Higginbotham left in disgust.)

"There, gentlemen, he goes, 'larding the lean earth as he walks along.' Well as Doctor Johnson said, 'who kills fat oxen should himself be fat.' Poor Hig! stuffed like one of his own blood-puddings, with a dropsical grief which nothing short of ten thousand dollars of Swink's money can cure. Well, as grief puffs him up, I don't wonder that nothing but depleting another man can cure him.

"And now, gentlemen, I come to the blood and thunder part of this young gentleman's harangue: empty and vapid; words and nothing else. If any part of this rigmarole was windier than any other part, this was it. He turned himself into a small cascade, making a great deal of noise to make a great deal of froth; tumbling; roaring; foaming; the shallower it ran, all the noisier it seemed. He fretted and knitted his brows; he beat the air and he vociferated, always emphasizing the meaningless words most

loudly; he puffed, swelled out and blowed off, until he seemed like a new bellows, all brass and wind. How he mouthed it—as those villainous stage players ranting out fustian in a barn theatre,” (mimicking)—“‘Who steals my purse, steals trash.’ (I don’t deny it) ‘Tis something.’ (query?) ‘nothing,’ (exactly.) ‘Tis mine; ’twas his, and has been slave to thousands—but he who filches from me my good name, robs me of that which not enricheth him,’ (not in the least,) ‘but makes me poor indeed;’ (just so, but whether any poorer than before he parted with the encumbrance, is another matter.)

“But the young gentleman refers to his youth. He ought not to reproach us of maturer age in that indirect way: no one would have suspected it of him or him of it, if he had not told it: indeed, from hearing him speak, we were prepared to give him credit for almost *any length of ears*. But does not the youth remember that Grotius was only seventeen when he was in full practice, and that he was Attorney General at twenty-two; and what is Grotius to this greater light? Not the burning of my smoke-house to the conflagration of Moscow!

“And yet, young Grotius tells us in the next breath, that he never knew such a slander in the course of his practice? Wonderful, indeed! seeing that his practice has all been done within the last six hours. Why, to hear him talk, you would suppose that he was an old Continental lawyer, grown gray in the service. H-i-s p-r-a-c-t-i-c-e! Why he is just in his legal swaddling clothes! His PRACTICE!! But I don’t wonder he can’t see the absurdity of such talk. How long does it take one of the canine tribe, after birth, to open his eyes!

“He talked, too, of *outside* influences; of the *public* expectations, and all that sort of demagogism. I observed no evidence of any great popular demonstrations in his favor, unless it be a tailor I saw stamping his feet; but whether that was because he had sat cross-legged so long he wanted exercise, or was rejoicing because he had got orders for a new suit, or *prospect of payment for an old one*, the gentleman can possibly tell better than I can.” (Here Hicks left.) “However, if this case *is* to be decided by the populace *here*, the gentleman will allow *me* the benefit of writ of error to the regimental muster, to be held, next Friday, at Reinhert’s Distillery.

"But, I suppose he meant to frighten *you* into a verdict, by intimating that the mob, frenzied by *his* eloquence, would tear you to pieces if you gave a verdict for defendant; like the equally eloquent barrister out West, who, concluding a case, said, 'Gentlemen, my client are as innocent of stealing that coting as the sun at noonday, and if you give it agin him, his brother, Sam Ketchins, next muster, will maul every mother's son of you.' I hope the sheriff will see to his duty and keep the crowd from you, gentlemen, if you should give us a verdict!

"But, gentlemen, I am tired of winnowing chaff; I have not had the reward paid by Gratiano for sifting *his* discourse: the two grains of wheat to the bushel. It is all froth—all wind—all bubble."

Kasm left me here for a time, and turned upon my client. Poor Higginbotham caught it thick and heavy. He wooled him, then skinned him, and then took to skinning off the under cuticle. Hig never skinned a beef so thoroughly. He put together all the facts about the witnesses' hearing the hogs squealing at night; the different marks of the hogs; the losses in the neighborhood; perverted the testimony and supplied omissions, until you would suppose, on hearing him, that it had been fully proved that poor Hig had stolen all the meat he had ever sold in the market. He asseverated that this suit was a malicious conspiracy between the Methodists and Masons, to crush his client. But all this I leave out, as not bearing on the main *subject*—myself.

He came back to me with a renewed appetite. He said he would conclude by paying his valedictory respects to his juvenile friend—as this was the last time he ever expected to have the pleasure of meeting him.

"That poetic young gentleman had said, that by your verdict against his client, you would blight for ever his reputation and that of his family—'that you would bend down the spirit of his manly son, and dim the radiance of his blooming daughter's beauty.' Very pretty, upon my word! But, gentlemen, not so fine—not so poetical by half, as a precious morceau of poetry which adorns the columns of the village newspapers, bearing the initials J.C.R. As this admirable production has excited a great deal of applause in the nurseries and boarding schools, I must beg to read it; not for the instruction of the gentleman, he

has already seen it; but for the entertainment of the Jury. It is addressed to R***B***, a young lady of this place. Here it goes."

Judge my horror, when, on looking up, I saw him take an old newspaper from his pocket, and, pulling down his spectacles, begin to read off in a stage-actor style, some verses I had written for Rose Bell's Album. Rose had been worrying me for some time, to write her something. To get rid of her importunities, I had scribbled off a few lines and copied them in the precious volume. Rose, the little fool, took them for something very clever (she never had more than a thimbleful of brains in her doll-baby head)—and was so tickled with them, that she got brother Bill, then about fourteen, to copy them off, as well as he could, and take them to the printing office. Bill threw them under the door; the printer, as big a fool as either, not only published them, but, in his infernal kindness, puffed them in some critical commendation of his own referring to "the gifted author," as "one of the most promising of the younger members of our bar."

The fun, by this time, grew fast and furious. The country people, who have about as much sympathy for a young town lawyer, badgered by an older one, as for a young cub beset by curs; and who have about as much idea or respect for poetry, as for witchcraft, joined in the mirth with great glee. They crowded around old Kasm, and stamped and roared as at a circus. The Judge and Sheriff in vain tried to keep order. Indeed, his honor *smiled out loud* once or twice; and to recover his retreat, pretended to cough, and fined the Sheriff five dollars for not keeping silence in the court. Even the old Clerk, whose immemorial pen behind his right ear had worn the hair from that side of his head, and who had not smiled in court for twenty years, and boasted that Patrick Henry couldn't disturb him in making up a judgment entry, actually turned his chair from the desk and *put down* his pen: afterwards he put his hand to his head three times in search of it; forgetting, in his attention to old Kasm, what he had done with it.

Old Kasm went on reading and commenting by turns. I forget what the ineffable trash was. I wouldn't recollect it if I could. My equanimity will only stand a phrase or two that still lingers in my memory, fixed there by old Kasm's ridicule. I had said

something about my "bosom's anguish"—about the passion that was consuming me; and, to illustrate it, or to make the line jingle, put in something about "Egypt's Queen taking the Asp to her bosom"—which, for the sake of rhyme or metre, I called "the venomous worm"—how the confounded thing was brought in, I neither know nor want to know. When old Kasm came to that, he said he fully appreciated what the young bard said—he believed it. He spoke of venomous *worms*. Now, if he (Kasm) might presume to give the young gentleman advice, he would recommend Swain's Patent Vermifuge. He had no doubt that it would effectually cure him of his malady, his love, and last, but not least, of his rhymes—which would be the happiest passage in his eventful history.

I couldn't stand it any longer. I had borne it to the last point of human endurance. When it came only to skinning, I was there; but when he showered down aquafortis on the raw, and then seemed disposed to rub it in, I fled. *Abii erubi evasi*. The last thing I heard was old Kasm calling me back, amidst the shouts of the audience—but no more.



The next information I received of the case, was in a letter that came to me at Natchez, my new residence, from Hicks, about a month afterwards, telling me that the jury (on what I should have stated old Kasm had got two infidels and four anti-masons) had given in a verdict for defendant: that before the court adjourned, Frank Glendye had got sober, and moved for a new trial, on the ground that the verdict was against evidence, and that the plaintiff had not had justice, *by reason of the incompetency of his counsel, and the abandonment of the cause*; and that he got a new trial (as well he should have done).

I learned through Hicks, some twelve months later, that the case had been tried; that Frank Glendye had made one of his greatest and most eloquent speeches; that Glendye had joined the Temperance Society, and was now one of the soberest and most attentive men to business at the bar, and was at the head of it in practice; that Higginbotham had recovered a verdict of \$2,000, and had put Swink in for \$500 costs, besides.

Hicks' letter gave me, too, the melancholy intelligence of old Kasm's death. He had died in an apoplectic fit, in the courthouse, while abusing an old preacher who had testified against him in a crim. con. case. He enclosed the proceedings of a bar meeting, in which "the melancholy dispensation which called our beloved brother hence while in the active discharge of his duties," was much deplored; but, with a pious resignation, which was greatly to be admired; "they submitted to the will," etc., and with a confidence old Kasm himself, if alive, might have envied, "trusted he had gone to a better and brighter world," etc., etc., which carried the doctrine of Universalism as far as it could well go. They concluded by resolving that the bar would wear crape on the left arm for thirty days. I don't know what the rest did, I didn't. Though not mentioned in his will, he had left me something to remember him by. Bright be the bloom and sweet the fragrance of the thistles on his gravel

Reader! I eschewed *genius* from that day. I took to accounts; did up every species of paper that came into my office with a tape string; had pigeon holes for all the bits of paper about me; walked down the street as if I were just going to bank and it wanted only five minutes to three o'clock; got a green bag and stuffed it full of old newspapers, carefully folded and labelled; read law, to fit imaginary cases, with great industry; dunned one of the wealthiest men in the city for fifty cents; sold out a widow for a twenty dollar debt, and bought in her things myself, publicly (and gave them back to her secretly, afterwards); associated only with skin-flints, brokers and married men, and discussed investments and stocks; soon got into business; looked wise and shook my head when I was consulted, and passed for a "powerful good judge of law"; confirmed the opinion by reading, in court, all the books and papers I could lay my hands on, and clearing out the courthouse by hum-drum details, common-place and statistics, whenever I made a speech at the bar—and thus, by this course of things, am able to write from my *sugar plantation*, this memorable history of the fall of *genius* and the rise of solemn humbug!

The Deacon's Masterpiece, *or*,
The Wonderful "One-Hoss Shay," A
Logical Story

Have you heard of the wonderful one-hoss shay,
That was built in such a logical way
It ran a hundred years to a day,
And then, of a sudden, it—ah, but stay,
I'll tell you what happened without delay,
Scaring the parson into fits,
Frightening people out of their wits,—
Have you ever heard of that, I say?

Seventeen hundred and fifty-five.
Georgius Secundus was then alive,—
Snuffy old drone from the German hive.
That was the year when Lisbon-town
Saw the earth open and gulp her down,
And Braddock's army was done so brown,
Left without a scalp to its crown.
It was on the terrible Earthquake-day
That the Deacon finished the one-hoss shay.

Now in building of chaises, I tell you what,
There is always *somewhere* a weakest spot,—

This selection is from *Poems*, by Oliver Wendell Holmes; "How Professors Die," which follows, is from *The Professor at the Breakfast-Table*, by Oliver Wendell Holmes. Both selections are reprinted by permission of Houghton Mifflin Company.

In hub, tire, felloe, in spring or thill,
In panel, or crossbar, or floor, or sill,
In screw, bolt, thoroughbrace,—lurking still,
Find it somewhere you must and will,—
Above or below, or within or without,—
And that's the reason, beyond a doubt,
That a chaise *breaks down*, but doesn't *wear out*.

But the Deacon swore, (as Deacons do,
With an "I dew vum," or an "I tell yeou,")
He would build one shay to beat the taown
'N' the keounty 'n' all the kentry raoun';
It should be so built that it *couldn't* break daown:
—"Fur," said the Deacon, "'t's mighty plain
Thut the weakes' place mus' stan' the strain;
'N' the way t' fix it, uz I maintain,
Is only jest
T' make that place uz strong uz the rest."

So the Deacon inquired of the village folk
Where he could find the strongest oak,
That couldn't be split nor bent nor broke,—
That was for spokes and floor and sills;
He sent for lancewood to make the thills;
The crossbars were ash, from the straightest trees,
The panels of whitewood, that cuts like cheese,
But lasts like iron for things like these;
The hubs of logs from the "Settler's ellum,"—
Last of its timber,—they couldn't sell 'em,
Never an axe had seen their chips,
And the wedges flew from between their lips,
Their blunt ends frizzled like celery-tips;
Step and prop-iron, bolt and screw,
Springs, tire, axle, and linchpin too,
Steel of the finest, bright and blue;
Thoroughbrace bison-skin, thick and wide;
Boot, top, dasher, from tough old hide
Found in the pit when the tanner died.

That was the way he "put her through."—
"There!" said the Deacon, "naow she'll dew!"

Do! I tell you, I rather guess
She was a wonder, and nothing less!
Colts grew horses, beards turned gray.
Deacon and deaconess dropped away,
Children and grandchildren—where were they?
But there stood the stout one-hoss shay
As fresh as on Lisbon-earthquake-day!

EIGHTEEN HUNDRED;—It came and found
The Deacon's masterpiece strong and sound.
Eighteen hundred increased by ten;—
"Hahnsum kerridge" they called it then.
Eighteen hundred and twenty came;—
Running as usual; much the same.
Thirty and forty at last arrive,
And then come fifty, and FIFTY-FIVE.
Little of all we value here
Wakes on the morn of its hundredth year
Without both feeling and looking queer.
In fact, there's nothing that keeps its youth,
So far as I know, but a tree and truth.
(This is a moral that runs at large;
Take it.—You're welcome.—No extra charge.)

FIRST OF NOVEMBER,—The Earthquake-day—
There are traces of age in the one-hoss shay,
A general flavor of mild decay,
But nothing local, as one may say.
There couldn't be,—for the Deacon's art
Had made it so like in every part
That there wasn't a chance for one to start.
For the wheels were just as strong as the thills,
And the floor was just as strong as the sills,
And the panels just as strong as the floor,
And the whipple-tree neither less nor more,
And the back-crossbar as strong as the fore,

And the spring and axle and hub *encore*.
And yet, as a *whole*, it is past a doubt
In another hour it will be *worn out*!

First of November, 'Fifty-five!
This morning the parson takes a drive.
Now, small boys, get out of the way!
Here comes the wonderful one-hoss shay,
Drawn by a rat-tailed, ewe-necked bay.
"Huddup!" said the parson.—Off went they.
The parson was working his Sunday's text,—
Had got to *fifthly*, and stopped perplexed
At what the—Moses—was coming next.
All at once the horse stood still,
Close by the meet'n'-house on the hill.
—First a shiver, and then a thrill,
Then something decidedly like a spill,—
And the parson was sitting upon a rock,
At half past nine by the meet'n'-house clock,—
Just the hour of the Earthquake shock!
—What do you think the parson found,
When he got up and stared around?
The poor old chaise in a heap or mound,
As if it had been to the mill and ground!
You see, of course, if you're not a dunce,
How it went to pieces all at once,—
All at once, and nothing first,—
Just as bubbles do when they burst.

End of the wonderful one-hoss shay.
Logic is logic. That's all I say.

How Professors Die

THE natural end of a tutor is to perish by starvation. It is only a question of time, just as with the burning of college libraries. These all burn up sooner or later, provided they are not housed in brick or stone and iron. I don't mean that you will see in the registry of deaths that this or that particular tutor died of well-marked, uncomplicated starvation. They may, even, in extreme cases, be carried off by a thin, watery kind of apoplexy, which sounds very well in the returns, but means little to those who know that it is only debility settling on the head. Generally, however they fade and waste away under various pretexts,—calling it dyspepsia, consumption, and so on, to put a decent appearance upon the case and keep up the credit of the family and the institution where they have passed through the successive stages of inanition.

In some cases it takes a great many years to kill a tutor by the process in question. You see they do get food and clothes and fuel, in appreciable quantities, such as they are. You will even notice rows of books in their rooms, and a picture or two,—things that look as if they had surplus money; but these superfluities are the water of crystallization to scholars, and you can never get them away till the poor fellows effloresce into dust. Do not be deceived. The tutor breakfasts on coffee made of beans, edulcorated with milk watered to the verge of transparency; his mutton is tough and elastic, up to the moment when it becomes tired out and tasteless; his coal is a sullen, sulphurous anthracite, which rusts into ashes, rather than burns, in the shallow grate; his flimsy broadcloth is too thin for winter and too thick for summer. The greedy lungs of fifty hot-blooded boys suck the oxygen from the air he breathes in his recitation-room. In short, he undergoes a process of gentle and gradual starvation.

The mother of little Iris was not called Electra, like hers of the old story, neither was her grandfather Oceanus. Her blood-name, which she gave away with her heart to the Latin tutor, was a

plain old English one, and her water-name was Hannah, beautiful as recalling the mother of Samuel, and admirable as reading equally well from the initial letter forwards and from the terminal letter backwards. The poor lady, seated with her companion at the chess-board of matrimony, had but just pushed forward her one little white pawn upon an empty square, when the Black Knight, that cares nothing for castles or kings or queens, swooped down upon her and swept her from the larger board of life.

The old Latin tutor put a modest blue stone at the head of his late companion, with her name and age and Eheul upon it,—a smaller one at her feet, with initials; and left her by herself, to be rained and snowed on,—which is a hard thing to do for those whom we have cherished tenderly.

About the time that the lichens, falling on the stone, like drops of water, had spread into fair, round rosettes, the tutor had starved into a slight cough. Then he began to draw the buckle of his black trousers a little tighter, and took in another reef in his never-ample waistcoat. His temples got a little hollow, and the contrasts of colour in his cheeks more vivid than of old. After a while his walks fatigued him, and he was tired, and breathed hard after going up a flight or two of stairs. Then came on other marks of inward trouble and general waste, which he spoke of to his physician as peculiar, and doubtless owing to accidental causes; to all which the doctor listened with deference, as if it had not been the old story that one in five or six of mankind in temperate climate tells, or has told for him, as if it were some thing new. As the doctor went out, he said to himself,—“On the rail at last. Accommodation train. A good many stops, but will get to the station by and by.” So the doctor wrote a recipe with the astrological sign of Jupiter before it, (just as your own physician does, inestimable reader, as you will see, if you look at his next prescription,) and departed, saying he would look in occasionally. After this, the Latin tutor began the usual course of “getting better,” until he got so much better that his face was very sharp, and when he smiled, three crescent lines showed at each side of his lips, and when he spoke, it was in a muffled whisper, and the white of his eye glistened as purely as the purest porcelain,—so much better, that he hoped—

by spring—he might be able—to attend—to his class again.—But he was recommended not to expose himself, and so kept his chamber, and occasionally not having anything to do, his bed. The unmarried sister with whom he lived took care of him; and the child, now old enough to be manageable and even useful in trifling offices, sat in the chamber, or played about.

Things could not go on so forever, of course. One morning his face was sunken and his hands were very very cold. He was “better,” he whispered, but sadly and faintly. After a while he grew restless and seemed a little wandering. His mind ran on his classics, and fell back on the Latin grammar.

“Iris!” he said,—“*filiola mea!*”—The child knew this meant my dear little daughter as well as if it had been English.—“Rain-bow!”—for he would translate her name at times,—“come to me,—*veni*”—and his lips went on automatically, and murmured, “*vel venito!*”—The child came and sat by his bedside and took his hand, which she could not warm, but which shot its rays of cold all through her slender frame. But there she sat, looking steadily at him. Presently he opened his lips feebly, and whispered, “*Moribundus.*” She did not know what that meant, but she saw that there was something new and sad. So she began to cry; but presently remembering an old book that seemed to comfort him at times, got up and brought a Bible in the Latin version, called the Vulgate. “Open it,” he said,—“I will read,—*segnius irritant*,—don’t put the light out,—*ah! haeret lateri*,—I am going,—*vale, vale, vale*, good-bye, good-bye,—the Lord take care of my child!—*Domine, audi—vel audito!*” His face whitened suddenly, and he lay still, with open eyes and mouth. He had taken his last degree.

P A R T T W O

The Middle Period

NOTE BY THE EDITOR

IN THE period between the Civil War and the first World War there were, again, two main trends in America's humor. One was the humor of local color of which we have a number of examples in this section, from the work of Kate Field, Bret Harte, John Luther Long, Sarah McLean Greene, and others. The second strain was a professional humor that had a uniquely American development. The two trends were combined in several of the best of the humorists. The greatest of them all, Mark Twain, brought the two trends to their supreme development in his work.

The humor basing itself on local color calls for no special comment. It derived from both the Yankee Down East humor and the more varied humor of the Southwest. It produced notable books, among them Eggleston's *Hoosier Schoolmaster* and *The Circuit Rider*, Wister's *The Virginian* and Cable's novels of the South, works which are difficult to excerpt from and are therefore not represented here.

On the other hand the directly professional humor of this period is an American phenomenon of special interest. In the manner in which it became and operated as a profession, it took on some of the characteristics of the stage. In the first place the humorists, Mark Twain among them, actually gave platform performances and these were among the most popular forms of public entertainment of the time. It survived, until fairly recently, in the vaudeville monologue, as professional humor survived in the now vanished humor magazines, *Puck*, *Life* and *Judge*. Books of which the performer was the author were sold in the auditorium and helped to dispose of enormous editions. Such books corresponded to the "best sellers" of our day.

Further, the humorists did not use their own names but, like actors, singers, circus performers, etc., they adopted professional names. Artemus Ward's real name was Charles Farrar Browne, Petroleum Vesuvius Nasby's was David Ross Locke, Josh Billings' was Henry Wheeler Shaw, the Danbury News Man's was James Montgomery Bailey, and Mark Twain's, of course, was Samuel Langhorne Clemens.

Much of the effect in this professional humor was obtained through the conscious deformation of the language. To this immigrant and local dialects lent themselves particularly well; but, for the same reason, much of the humor of the time has lost its point. Those immigrant groups are now second and third generation, and in general speak the language as well or as badly as the rest of us, and radio is accelerating the gradual obliteration of local speech differences. Much of this humor, moreover, played on topical issues which also have long ago lost their point.

But the most significant characteristic was a conscious craftsmanship which so distinguished American humor that it became the envy of the world, and particularly of the British, by whom, of course, it was best appreciated. The high prestige of American humor dates from this time. Actually, Americans came to appreciate their humorists as artists from the acclaim they received abroad. And the traditional portrait of the humorless Englishman is partly the product of the self-deprecation by English critics when they compared their humor with ours.

This conscious craftsmanship which so captivated foreign critics is excellently illustrated by an anecdote of the professional humorist, Ely Perkins (Melville Landon), about a visit to his farm by the more famous Artemus Ward.

"One day the Negroes were grinding their hoes on an old dilapidated grindstone which wobbled and swayed up and down, being worn by time and hard usage into an eccentric ellipse. When the eyes of Artemus sighted the rickety grindstone, he settled into a long and hearty laugh. Then he eased himself down upon his elbows but did not cease his intermittent chuckling. 'There,' he gasped, as he wobbled his arm through something meant for a parabola, 'there, is wit personified or thingified. When you can express an eccentric anti-climax instead of a rounded sentence, then you have something funny.'

"'People laugh at me,' the humorist once said to me, 'more because of my eccentric sentences, than on account of the subject matter. . . . There is no wit in the form of a well-rounded sentence. . . . If I say Alexander the Great conquered the world, and then sighed because he could not do it some more, there is a funny mixture.'"

A favorite literary effect came from this deliberate use of the anti-climax. Here are some other typical examples:

From Petroleum Nasby: "I shel withdraw from public life and start a grocery and in that umble callin will flote peecefully down the stream uv time until my weather beaten bark strikes on the rocks of death, gettin my lickin in the meantime (uv which I consume many) at wholesale prices."

Here is another from Mr. Dooley: "There was a grand pro-cission iv lithry men—Tinnyson and Longfellow and Bill Nye and Ella Wheeler Wilcox and Tim Scanlon."

And finally, one from Mark Twain, about a dragon: "He ate men and cattle impartially, and was exceedingly unpopular. . . . So the most renowned knights came from the four corners of the earth and retired down the dragon's throat one after the other."

If one can see the ancestors of this humor in the extravagances of the tall story, one can also see its descendants in the gag lines and the artful understatement of *New Yorker* humor.

There were other strains, too, in the humor of this period, and as time went on the humorists showed a perceptible urbanization. In this there was a continuation of bookish older influences, such as can be seen in the work of John Kendrick Bangs, Frank Stockton, Frank Moore Colby, and others.

The humor also reflected social realities. In a way, the vigorous but self-conscious playing with language, the keen sensitiveness to its powers, reflected a nation growing literate and self-expressive. In the use of immigrant dialects, one can see a sort of literary boiling over of the cultural melting pot that marked America, above all nations, after the Civil War. In the professionalization of humor, there was a significant emphasis upon its financial gains. All the professional humorists made frequent, witty and frank allusions to money. Money-making had become a conscious part of American life and the humorists not only reflected it but shared in the sense of success that it gave. But, as time went on,

as the tarnish appeared on "the Gilded Age," a satirical note entered—and in this, too, humor was a reflection of life. It took its highest form in the work of its greatest writer, Mark Twain, who satirized the old world for the brutalities in its traditions but did not overlook the brutalities preserved and newly developed in our own.

Mr. Dooley on the Philippines

"I KNOW what I'd do if I was Mack," said Mr. Hennessy. "I'd hist a flag over th' Ph'lippeens, an' I'd take in th' whole lot iv thim."

"An' yet," said Mr. Dooley, "'tis not more thin two months since ye larned whether they were islands or canned goods. Ye'er back yard is so small that ye'er cow can't turn r-round without buttin' th' woodshed off th' premises, an' ye wudden't go out to th' stock yards without takin' out a policy on her life. Suppose ye was standin' at th' corner iv State Sthreet an' Archey R-road, wud ye know what car to take to get to th' Ph'lippeens? If yer son Packy was to ask ye where th' Ph'lippeens is, cud ye give him anny good idea whether they was in Rooshia or jus' west iv th' thracks?"

"Mebbe I cudden't," said Mr. Hennessy, haughtily, "but I'm f'r takin' thim in, annyhow."

"So might I be," said Mr. Dooley, "if I cud on'y get me mind on it. Wan iv the worst things about this here war is th' way it's makin' puzzles f'r our poor, tired heads. Whin I wint into it, I thought all I'd have to do was to set up here behind th' bar with a good tin-cint see-gar in me teeth, an' toss dinnymite bombs into th' hated city iv Havana. But look at me now. Th' war is still goin' on; an' ivry night, whin I'm countin' up the cash, I'm askin' mesilf will I annex Cubia or lave it to the Cubians? Will

From *Mr. Dooley at His Best*, by Finley Peter Dunne; copyright 1938 by Charles Scribner's Sons.

I take Porther Ricky or put it by? An' what shud I do with the Ph'lippeens? Oh, what shud I do with thim? I can't annex thim because I don't know where they ar-re. I can't let go iv thim because some wan else'll take thim if I do. They are eight thousan' iv thim islands, with a popylation iv wan hundherd millyon naked savages; an' me bed-room's crowded now with me an' th' bed. How can I take thim in, an' how on earth am I goin' to cover th' nakedness iv thim savages with me wan shoot iv clothes? An' yet 'twud break me heart to think iv givin' people I niver see or heerd tell iv back to other people I don't know. An', if I don't take thim, Schwartzmeister down th' sthreet, that has half me thrade already, will grab thim sure.

"It ain't that I'm afraid iv not doin' th' r-right thing in th' end, Hinmissy. Some mornin' I'll wake up an' know jus' what to do, an' that I'll do. But 'tis th' annoyance in th' mane time. I've been r-readin' about th' counthry. 'Tis over beyant ye're left shoulder whin ye're facin' east. Jus' throw ye'er thumb back, an' ye have it as ac'rate as anny man in town. 'Tis farther thin Boohlgahrya an' not so far as Blewchoochoo. It's near Chiny, an' it's not so near; an', if a man was to bore a well through fr'm Goshen, Indianny, he might sthrike it, an' thin again he might not. It's a poverty-strhicken counthry, full iv goold an' precious stones, where th' people can pick dinner off th' threes an' ar-re starvin' because they have no step-ladders. Th's inhabitants is mostly naygurs an' Chinnymen, peaceful, industhrus, an' law-abidin', but savage an' bloodthirsty in their methods. They wear no clothes except what they have on, an' each woman has five husbands an' each man has five wives. Th' r-rest goes into th' discard, th' same as here. Th' islands has been ownded be Spain since before th' fire; an' she's threated thim so well they're now up in ar-rms again her, except a majority iv thim which is thurly loyal. Th' natives seldom fight, but whin they get mad at wan another they r-run-a-muck. Whin a man r-runs-a-muck, sometimes they hang him an' sometimes they discharge him an' hire a new motorman. Th' women ar-re beautiful, with languishin' black eyes, an' they smoke see-gars, but ar-re hurried an' incomplete in their dhress. I see a pitcher iv wan th' other day with nawthin' on her but a basket of cocoanuts an' a hoop-skirt. They're no prudes. We import juke, hemp, cigar wrappers, sugar,

an' fairy tales fr'm th' Ph'lippeens, an' export six-inch shells an' th' like. Iv late th' Ph'lippeens has awaked to th' fact that they're behin th' times, an' has received much American amminition in their midst. They say th' Spanyards is all tore up about it.

"I larned all this fr'm th' papers, an' I know 'tis sthraight. An' yet, Hinnissy, I dinnaw what to do about th' Ph'lippeens. An' I'm all alone in th' wurruld. Ivrybody else has made up his mind. Ye ask anny con-ducthor on Ar-rchy R-road, an' he'll tell ye. Ye can find out fr'm the papers; an', if ye really want to know, all ye have to do is to ask a prom'nent citizen who can mow all th' lawn he owns with a safety razor. But I don't know."

"Hang on to thim," said Mr. Hennessy, stoutly. "What we've got we must hold."

"Well," said Mr. Dooley, "if I was Mack, I'd lave it to George. I'd say: 'George,' I'd say, 'if ye're f'r hangin' on, hang on it is. If ye say, lave go, I dhrop thim.' 'Twas George won thim with th' shells, an' th' question's up to him."

Anthony Comstock in Heaven

(GOD is reclining on a marble bench on one of the piazzas of the universe, listening to the choiring of the spheres. GABRIEL is asleep on another bench, his horn by his side.)

(ST. PETER comes in.)

ST. PETER: Excuse me, but—

GOD: Oh, Peter. Cannot I have a little peace, even in Lent?

ST. PETER: But this is very important, Lord. It relates to a lost soul.

GOD: That's not important. Well? Well, what is it?

ST. PETER: There is a soul just outside the gate cutting the most ridiculous capers.

GOD: Why don't you open the gate and let him in?

ST. PETER: He won't come in.

GOD: Send a party out and shoo him in. Peter, the great problem before you today is the falling off in immigration.

ST. PETER: I know it. That's why I came to you about this soul. I have tried to shoo him in but every time anyone starts out, he puts his hands down in front of himself and scampers away like a wild goat.

GOD: Can't you talk to him?

ST. PETER: Not till he can find the rag of a cloud to wrap about his middle.

From Heavenly Discourse, by Charles Erskine Scott Wood; copyright 1927 by The Vanguard Press.

GOD: What does he say then?

ST. PETER: Says he is naked.

GOD: What?

ST. PETER: Says he is naked.

GOD: Well, by myself, did he expect to bring his trunk with him?

ST. PETER: That's all we can get out of him; says he has no clothes on.

GOD: Oh, go back and tell him nobody here wears clothes.

ST. PETER: I have, but he won't listen. Says we are indecent, immoral.

GOD: He's just a plain lunatic.

ST. PETER: I know it, but I dare not draw the line at lunatics.

GOD: That's true. They are your best customers. Are there any of those old halos left?

ST. PETER: Billions of them, but they are pretty rusty.

GOD: Never mind. Take as bright a one as you can find; rub it up a little and set it down by the wall near the gate; a harp, too. Tell him they are his, and everybody get out of sight; then when he steals up, some of you drop down from the wall and boost him through the gate. When you catch him bring him here. A new kind of idiot. From the earth, of course?

ST. PETER: Yes, Lord.

GOD: Of course. Go get him.

(ST. PETER goes out.)

GOD: I am sorry I made the earth—it has been to me like a flea under a monk's shirt. Clothes! Clothes! The poor fool. Gabriel, call Jesus.

GABRIEL: Yes, Lord.

(Blows a blast on his horn. JESUS comes in.)

GOD: My son, when you were with these pests you call your earthly brethren, did you give out the idea that the naked body is indecent?

JESUS: No Father. How could I be so indecent?

GOD: Of course not. Did you teach that my chiefest miracle, birth, is vile? Male and female—I created them that they might continue the wonder of creation. Did you teach that sex is vile?

JESUS: Father!

GOD: Forgive me, my son. Do you happen to know whether that

church of Peter's teaches that nakedness is indecent and that you ascended into heaven with all your clothes on?

JESUS: I know nothing of that church, Father, nor does my good Peter.

GOD: Forgive me, my son. Peter has just been here telling me there is a crazy soul dodging about outside the gate, apparently anxious to get in, but afraid. The poor idiot says he has no clothes on.

JESUS: Poor soul. He mistakes cloth for purity.

GOD: Wait here and we will see. Peter has gone to fetch him. Here they come now. Why, what a curious spectacle.

(ST. PETER comes in with the soul of ANTHONY COMSTOCK. It crouches down, holding its knees close together, and its hands between its thighs.)

ST. PETER: Here it is, Lord.

GOD: Well, for my sake!

SOUL: Excuse me. Please excuse me. I couldn't help it. He brought me here in spite of my resistance.

GOD: Excuse what? What's the matter with you?

SOUL: For heaven's sake, give me something to put on. Haven't you a robe or something? O, give me a shirt.

GOD: A robe? No! What would I do with a robe? Look at me. I am your God. Your naked God, who created man in his own image.

SOUL: Give me a fig-leaf; just a plain fig-leaf.

GOD: A fig-leaf?

JESUS: Poor lunatic.

SOUL: O, haven't you got just a common little fig-leaf?

GOD: What does he mean?

SOUL: O, don't you know? What Eve put on when she found she was naked.

GOD: When she found she was naked?

JESUS: Father, he is not in his right mind.

GOD: His mind? Call Eve.

(An angel goes out.)

ST. PETER: He is crazy. Crazy as the Devil.

GOD: Peter, get it out of your head that the Devil is crazy.

SOUL: No, God, I am not crazy. I am just pure, Can it be that I am the only pure soul in heaven?

GOD: I hope to myself you are.

(EVE comes in.)

SOUL: Oh! Oh! Please, give me something to put on.

GOD: Stop squirming. Keep quiet. What's the matter now?

SOUL: A female angel, naked. She is looking at me. Please, please give me something to put on.

GOD: Give him his halo, Peter.

SOUL: O God, I don't want a hat. Haven't you got a fig-leaf? A little one, a second-hand one, any kind of a fig-leaf?

GOD: Stop your cringing and crouching and whining. Stand up like a decent soul and tell us what you want.

SOUL: I can't stand up. Don't you see I can't stand up? She is looking right at me.

GOD: Everybody is looking at you; you are making a spectacle of yourself. Who is looking at you?

SOUL: That lady angel.

GOD: Well, stand up and look at her. She is Mother Eve. Stand up and look at her.

SOUL: Oh, God!

GOD: O, the Devil.

EVE: Does he not think I am beautiful?

GOD: What is the matter with Eve?

SOUL: She is naked. She hasn't even a fig-leaf?

GOD: But isn't she beautiful?

SOUL: O, God—not even a fig-leaf.

EVE: What does he want?

SOUL: I want two fig-leaves—one for me, and one for you. Let us be pure.

GOD: He is too obscene for words. Gabriel, take him away; fumigate him and put him out. (GABRIEL leads out the Pure Soul.)

Now, Peter, I will see no one till after Lent. Has anyone some smelling salts? That soul left a bad smell.

(EVE presents her salts bottle.)

GOD: Thank you. A beautiful bottle.

EVE: Crystal. Vulcan carved it for me.

GOD: The good old pagan. I had such an easy time with the pagans—but since these Christians, immortality has hardly been worth living. Let us visit Vulcan.

(All go out.)

The Whistling River

IT SEEMS that some years before the winter of the Blue Snow (which every old logger remembers because of a heavy fall of bright blue snow which melted to ink, giving folks the idea of writing stories like these, so they tell) Ol' Paul was logging on what was then known as the Whistling River. It got its name from the fact that every morning, right on the dot, at nineteen minutes after five, and every night at ten minutes past six, it r'ared up to a height of two hundred and seventy-three feet and let loose a whistle that could be heard for a distance of six hundred and three miles in any direction.

Of course, if one man listening by himself can hear that far, it seems reasonable to suppose that two men listening together can hear it just twice as far. They tell me that even as far away as Alaska, most every camp had from two to four whistle-listeners (as many as were needed to hear the whistle without straining), who got two bits a listen and did nothing but listen for the right time, especially quitting time.

However, it seems that the river was famous for more than its whistling, for it was known as the orneriest river that ever ran between two banks. It seemed to take a fiendish delight in tying whole rafts of good saw logs into more plain and fancy knots than forty-three old sailors even knew the names of. It was an old "side winder" for fair. Even so, it is unlikely that Ol'

From *Ol' Paul, The Mighty Logger*, by Glen Rounds; copyright 1936 by Holiday House.

Paul would ever have bothered with it, if it had left his beard alone.

It happened this way. It seems that Ol' Paul is sitting on a low hill one afternoon, combing his great curly beard with a pine tree, while he plans his winter operations. All of a sudden like, and without a word of warning, the river h'ists itself up on its hind legs and squirts about four thousand five hundred and nineteen gallons of river water straight in the center of Ol' Paul's whiskers.

Naturally Paul's considerably startled, but says nothing, figuring that if he pays it no mind, it'll go 'way and leave him be. But no sooner does he get settled back with his thinking and combing again, than the durn river squirts some more! This time, along with the water, it throws in for good measure a batch of mud turtles, thirteen large carp, a couple of drowned muskrat, and half a raft of last year's saw logs. By this time Ol' Paul is pretty mad, and he jumps up and lets loose a yell that causes a landslide out near Pike's Peak, and startles a barber in Missouri so he cuts half the hair off the minister's toupee, causing somewhat of a stir thereabouts. Paul stomps around waving his arms for a spell, and allows:

"By the Gee-Jumpin' John Henry and the Great Horn Spoon, I'll tame that river or bust a gallus tryin'."

He goes over to another hill and sits down to think out a way to tame a river, forgetting his winter operations entirely. He sits there for three days and forty-seven hours without moving, thinking at top speed all the while, and finally comes to the conclusion that the best thing to do is to take out the kinks. But he knows that taking the kinks out of a river as tricky as this one is apt to be quite a chore, so he keeps on sitting there while he figures out ways and means. Of course, he could dig a new channel and run the river through that, but that was never Paul's way. He liked to figure out new ways of doing things, even if they were harder.

Meanwhile he's gotten a mite hungry, so he hollers down to camp for Sourdough Sam to bring him up a little popcorn, of which he is very fond. So Sam hitches up a four-horse team while his helpers are popping the corn, and soon arrives at Paul's feet with a wagon load.

Paul eats popcorn and thinks. The faster he thinks the faster he eats, and the faster he eats the faster he thinks, until finally his hands are moving so fast that nothing shows but a blur, and they make a wind that is uprooting trees all around him. His chewing sounds like a couple hundred coffee grinders all going at once. In practically no time at all the ground for three miles and a quarter in every direction is covered to a depth of eighteen inches with popcorn scraps, and several thousand small birds and animals, seeing the ground all white and the air filled with what looks like snowflakes, conclude that a blizzard is upon them and immediately freeze to death, furnishing the men with pot pies for some days.

But to get back to Ol' Paul's problem. Just before the popcorn is all gone, he decides that the only practical solution is to hitch Babe, the Mighty Blue Ox, to the river and let him yank it straight.

Babe was so strong that he could pull mighty near anything that could be hitched to. His exact size, as I said before, is not known, for although it is said that he stood ninety-three hands high, it's not known whether that meant ordinary logger's hands, or hands the size of Paul's, which, of course, would be something else again.

However, they tell of an eagle that had been in the habit of roosting on the tip of Babe's right horn, suddenly deciding to fly to the other. Columbus Day, it was, when he started. He flew steadily, so they say, night and day, fair weather and foul, until his wing feathers were worn down to pinfeathers and a new set grew to replace them. In all, he seems to have worn out seventeen sets of feathers on the trip, and from reaching up to brush the sweat out of his eyes so much, had worn all the feathers off the top of his head, becoming completely bald, as are all of his descendants to this day. Finally the courageous bird won through, reaching the brass ball on the tip of the left horn on the seventeenth of March. He waved a wing weakly at the cheering lumberjacks and 'lowed as how he'd of made it sooner but for the head winds.

But the problem is how to hitch Babe to the river, as it's a well-known fact that an ordinary log chain and skid hook will

not hold water. So after a light lunch of three sides of barbecued beef, half a wagon load of potatoes, carrots and a few other odds and ends, Ol' Paul goes down to the blacksmith shop and gets Ole, the Big Swede, to help him look through the big instruction book that came with the woods and tells how to do most everything under the sun. But though Paul reads the book through from front to back twice while Ole reads it from back to front, and they both read it once from bottom to top, they find nary a word about how to hook onto a river. However, they do find an old almanac stuck between the pages and get so busy reading up on the weather for the coming year, and a lot of fancy ailments of one kind and another that it's supper time before they know it, and the problem's still unsolved. So Paul decides that the only practical thing to do is to invent a rigging of some kind himself.

At any rate he has to do something, as every time he hears the river whistle, it makes him so mad he's fit to be tied, which interferes with his work more than something. No one can do their best under such conditions.

Being as how this was sort of a special problem, he thought it out in a special way. Paul was like that. As he always thought best when he walked, he had the men survey a circle about thirty miles in diameter to walk around. This was so that if he was quite a while thinking it out he wouldn't be finding himself way down in Australia when he'd finished.

When everything is ready, he sets his old fur cap tight on his head, clasps his hands behind him, and starts walking and thinking. He thinks and walks. The faster he walks the faster he thinks. He makes a complete circle every half hour. By morning he's worn a path that is knee-deep even on him, and he has to call the men to herd the stock away and keep them from falling in and getting crippled. Three days later he thinks it out, but he's worn himself down so deep that it takes a day and a half to get a ladder built that will reach down that far. When he does get out, he doesn't even wait for breakfast, but whistles for Babe and tears right out across the hills to the north.

The men have no idea what he intends to do, but they know from experience that it'll be good, so they cheer till their throats

are so sore they have to stay around the mess hall drinking Paul's private barrel of cough syrup till supper time. And after that they go to bed and sleep very soundly.

Paul and the Ox travel plenty fast, covering twenty-four townships at a stride, and the wind from their passing raises a dust that doesn't even begin to settle for some months. There are those who claim that the present dust storms are nothing more or less than that same dust just beginning to get back to earth—but that's a matter of opinion. About noon, as they near the North Pole, they begin to see blizzard tracks, and in a short time are in the very heart of their summer feeding grounds. Taking a sack from his shoulder, Paul digs out materials for a box trap, which he sets near a well-traveled blizzard trail, and baits with fresh icicles from the top of the North Pole. Then he goes away to eat his lunch, but not until he's carefully brushed out his tracks—a trick he later taught the Indians.

After lunch he amuses himself for a while by throwing huge chunks of ice into the water for Babe to retrieve, but he soon has to whistle the great beast out, as every time he jumps into the water he causes such a splash that a tidal wave threatens Galveston, Texas, which at that time was inhabited by nobody in particular. Some of the ice he threw in is still floating around the ocean, causing plenty of excitement for the iceberg patrol.

About two o'clock he goes back to his blizzard trap and discovers that he has caught seven half-grown blizzards and one grizzled old nor'wester, which is raising considerable fuss and bids fair to trample the young ones before he can get them out. But he finally manages to get a pair of half-grown ones in his sack and turns the others loose.

About midnight he gets back to camp, and hollers at Ole, the Big Swede:

"Build me the biggest log chain that's ever been built, while I stake out these dadblasted blizzards! We're goin' to warp it to 'er proper, come mornin'."

Then he goes down to the foot of the river and pickets one of the blizzards to a tree on the bank, then crosses and ties the other directly opposite. Right away the river begins to freeze. In ten minutes the slush ice reaches nearly from bank to bank, and the blizzards are not yet really warmed to their work, either.

Paul watches for a few minutes, and then goes back to camp to warm up, feeling mighty well satisfied with the way things are working out.

In the morning the river has a tough time raring up for what it maybe knows to be its last whistle, for its foot is frozen solid for more than seventeen miles. The blizzards have really done the business.

By the time breakfast is over, the great chain's ready and Babe all harnessed. Paul quick-like wraps one end of the chain seventy-two times around the foot of the river, and hitches Babe to the other. Warning the men to stand clear, he shouts at the Ox to pull. But though the great beast strains till his tongue hangs out, pulling the chain out into a solid bar some seven and a half miles long, and sinks knee-deep in the solid rock, the river stubbornly refuses to budge, hanging onto its kinks like a snake in a gopher hole. Seeing this, Ol' Paul grabs the chain and, letting loose a holler that blows the tarpaper off the shacks in the Nebraska sandhills, he and the Ox together give a mighty yank that jerks the river loose from end to end, and start hauling it out across the prairie so fast that it smokes.

After a time Paul comes back and sights along the river, which now is as straight as a gun barrel. But he doesn't have long to admire his work, for he soon finds he has another problem on his hands. You sec, it's this way. A straight river is naturally much shorter than a crooked one, and now all the miles and miles of extra river that used to be in the kinks are running wild out on the prairie. This galls the farmers in those parts more than a little. So it looks like Paul had better figure something out, and mighty soon at that, for already he can see clouds of dust the prairie folks are raising as they come at top speed to claim damages.

After three minutes of extra deep thought he sends a crew to camp to bring his big cross-cut saw and a lot of bailing wire. He saws the river into nine-mile lengths and the men roll it up like linoleum and tie it with the wire. Some say he used these later when he logged off the desert, rolling out as many lengths as he needed to float his logs. But that's another story.

But his troubles with the Whistling River were not all over. It seems that being straightened sort of took the gimp out of the

river, and from that day on it refused to whistle even a bird call. And as Paul had gotten into the habit of depending on the whistle to wake up the men in the morning, things were a mite upset.

First he hired an official getter-upper who rode through the camp on a horse, and beat a triangle. But the camp was so big that it took three hours and seventy-odd minutes to make the trip. Naturally some of the men were called too early and some too late. It's hard to say what might have happened if Squeaky Swanson hadn't showed up about that time. His speaking voice was a thin squeak, but when he hollered he could be heard clear out to Kansas on a still day. So every morning he stood outside the cookshack and hollered the blankets off every bunk in camp. Naturally the men didn't stay in bed long after the blankets were off them, what with the cold wind and all, so Squeaky was a great success and for years did nothing but holler in the mornings.

Interview with President Lincoln

I HAV no politics. Nary a one. I'm not in the bizness. If I was I spose I should holler versifrusly in the streets at nite, and go home to Betsy Jane smellen of coal ile and gin in the mornin. I should go to the Poles arly. I should stay there all day. I should see to it that my nabers was thar. I should git carriges to take the kripples, the infirm, and the indignant thar. I should be on guard agin frauds and sich. I should be on the look out for the infamus lise of the enemy, got up jest be4 elecshun for perlitical effect. When all was over, and my candydate was elected, I should move heving & arth—so to speak—until I got orfice, which if I didn't git a orfice I should turn round and abooze the Administration with all my mite and maine. But I'm not in the bizness. I'm in a far more respectful bizness nor what pollertics is. I wouldn't giv two cents to be a Congressser. The wus insult I ever reccived was when sertin citizens of Baldinsville axed me to run fur the Legislater. Sez I, "My frends, dostest think I'd stoop to that there?" They turned as white as a sheet. I spoke in my most orfullest tones, & they knowd I wasn't to be trifled with. They slunked out of site to onct.

There4, havin no politics, I made bold to visit Old Abe at his humstid in Springfield. I found the old feller in his parler, surrounded by a perfeck swarm of orfice-seekers. Knowin he had been captin of a flat boat on the roarin Mississippi I

This selection, and "The Showman's Courtship," which follows, 'are both from *Artemus Ward: His Book*.

thought I'd address him in sailor lingo, so sez I, "Old Abe, ahoy! Let out yer main-suls, reef hum the fore-castle & throw yer jib-poop over-board! Shiver, my timbers, my harty!" (N.B.—This is ginuine mariner langwidge. I know, becawz I've seen sailor plays acted out by them New York theater fellers.) Old Abe lookt up quite cross & sez, "Send in yer petition by & by. I can't possibly look at it now. Indeed I can't. It's onpossible, sir!"

"Mr. Linkin, who do you spect I air?" sed I.

"A orfice-seeker, to be sure!" sed he.

"Wall, sir," sed I, "you's never more mistaken in your life. You hain't gut a orfis I'd take under no circumstances. I'm A. Ward. Wax figgers is my perfeshun. I'm the father of Twins, and they look like me—both of them. I cum to pay a frendly visit to the President-eleck of the United States. If so be you wants to see me, say so—if not, say so, & I'm orf like a jug handle."

"Mr. Ward, sit down. I am glad to see you, sir."

"Repose in Abraham's Buzzum!" sed one of the orfice-seekers, his idce bein to get orf a goak at my expense.

"Wall," sez I, "ef all you fellers repose in that there Buzzum thare'll be mity poor nussin for sum of you!" where upon Old Abe buttoned his weskit clear up and blusht like a maidin of sweet 16. Jest at this pint of the conversation another swarm of orfice-seekers arrove & cum pilin into the parler. Sum wanted post-orfices, sum wanted collectorships, sum wantid furrin mis-sions, and all wanted sumthin. I thought Old Abe would go crazy. He hadn't more than had time to shake hands with 'em, before another tremenjis crowd cum porein onto his premises. His house and dooryard was now perfectly overflowed with orfice-seekers, all clameruss for a immejit interview with Old Abe. One man from Ohio, who had about seven inches of corn whisky into him, mistook me for Old Abe, and addrest me as "the Pra-hayrie Flower of the West!" Thinks I, *you want a offiss putty bad*. Another man with a gold heded cane and a red nose, told Old Abe he was "a second Washington & the Pride of the Boundless West."

Sez I, "Squire, you wouldn't take a small post-offis if you could git it, would you?"

Sez he, "A patrit is abuv them things, sir!"

"There's a putty big crop of patrits this season, aint there, Squire?" sez I, when *another* crowd of offiss-seekers pored in. The house, dooryard, barn, & woodshed was now all full, and when *another* crowd cum I told 'em not to go away for want of room, as the hog-pen was still empty. One patrit from a small town in Michygan went up on top the house, got into the chimney and slid down into the parler where Old Abe was endevertin to keep the hungry pack of orfice-seekers from chawin him up alive without benefit of clergy. The minit he reached the fire-place, he jumt up, brusht the soot out of his eyes, and yelled: "Don't make eny pintment at the Spunkville post-offiss till you've read my papers. All the respectful men in our town is signers to that there dockyment!"

"Good God!" cride Old Abe, "they cum upon me from the skize—down the chimneys, and from the bowels of the yearth!" He hadn't more'n got them words out of his delikit mouth before two fat offis-seekers from Wisconsin, in endevertin to crawl atween his legs for the purpuss of applyin for the tollgate-ship at Milwawky, upsot the President-eleck, & he would hev gone sprawlin into the fire-place if I hadn't caught him in these arms. But I hadn't morn'n stood him up strate, before another man cum crashin down the chimney, his head strikin me vilently agin the inards and prostrating my voluptuous form onto the floor. "Mr. Linkin," shoutid the infatooated being, "my papers is signed by every clergyman in our town, and likewise the skoolmaster!"

Sez I, "You egrejis ass," gitting up & brushin the dust from my eyes, "I'll sign your papers with this bunch of bones, if you don't be a little more keerful how you make my bread-basket a depot in the futer. How do you like that air perfumery?" sez I, shuving my fist under his nose. "Them's the kind of papers I'll giv you! Them's the papers *you* want!"

"But I workt hard for the ticket; I toiled night and day! The patrit should be rewarded!"

"Virtoo," sed I, holdin the infatooated man by the coat-collar, "virtoo, sir is its own reward. Look at me!" He did look at me, and qualed be4 my base. "The fact is," I continued, lookin round on the hungry crowd, "there is scacely a offiss for every ile lamp carrid round durin this campane. I wish thare was. I wish

there was furrin missions to be filled on varis lonely Islands where eppydemics rage incessantly, and if I was in Old Abe's place I'd send every mother's son of you to them. What air you here for?" I continnered, warmin up considerable, "can't you giv Abe a minit's peace? Don't you see he's worrid most to death? Go home, you miserable men, go home & till the sile! Go to peddlin tinware—go to choppin wood—go to bilin sope—stuff sassengers—black boots—git a clerkship on sum respectable manure cart—go round as original Swiss Bell Ringers—becum 'original and only' Campbell Minstrels—go to lecturin at 50 dollars a nite—imbark in the peanut bizniss—write for the *Ledger*—saw off your legs and go round givin concerts, with techin appeals to a charitable public, printed on your handbills—anything for a honest livin, but don't come round here drivin Old Abe crazy by your outrajis cuttings up! Go home. 'Stand not upon the order of your goin,' but go to onct! Ef in five minits from this time," sez I, pullin out my new sixteen dollar huntin cased watch, and brandishin it before their eyes,—“Ef in five minits from this time a single sole of you remains on these here premises, I'll go out to my cage near by, and let my Boy Constructor loose! & ef he gits amung you, you'll think old Solferino has cum again and no mistake!” You ought to hev seen them scamper, Mr. Fair. They run off as though Satun hisself was after them with a red hot ten pronged pitchfork. In five minits the premises was clear.

“How kin I ever repay you, Mr. Ward, for your kindness?” sed Old Abe, advancin and shakin me warmly by the hand. “How kin I ever repay you, sir?”

“By givin the whole country a good, sound administration. By porein ile upon the troubled watur, North and South. By pursoooin a patriotic, firm, and just course, and then, if any State wants to secede, let 'em Sesesh!”

“How 'bout my Cabinit, Mister Ward?” sed Abe.

“Fill it up with Showmen, sir! Showmen is devoid of politics. They hain't got any principles! They know how to cater for the public. They know what the public wants, North & South. Showmen, sir, is honest men. Ef you doubt their literary abiliy, look at their posters, and see small bills! Ef you want a Cabinit as is a Cabinit, fill it up with showmen, but don't call on me.

The moral wax figger perfeshun mustn't be permitted to go down while there's a drop of blood in these veins! A. Linkin, I wish you well! Ef Powers or Walcutt wus to pick out a model for a beautiful man, I scacely think they'd sculp you; but ef you do the fair thing by your country, you'll make as putty a angel as any of us! A. Linkin, use the talents which Nature has put into you judishusly and firmly, and all will be well! A. Linkin, adool!"

He shook me cordyully by the hand—we exchanged picters so we could gaze upon each others' liniments when far away from one another—he at the hellum of the ship of State, and I at the hellum of the show bizniss—admittance 15 cents.

The Showman's Courtship

THERE was many affectin ties which made me hanker arter Betsy Jane. Her father's farm jined our'n; their cows and our'n squench't their thirst at the same spring; our old mares both had stars in their forrerd; the measles broke out in both famerlies at nearly the same period; our paricnts (Betsy's and mine) slept regularly every Sunday in the same meetin house, and the nabers used to obsarve, "How thick the Wards and Peasleys air!" It was a surblime site, in the Spring of the year, to see our sevrul mothers (Betsy's and mine) with their gowns pin'd up so thay coudn't sile 'em, affecshunitly Bilin sope together & aboozin the nabers.

Altho I hankered intently arter the objeck of my affecshuns, I darsunt tell her of the fires which was rajin in my manly Buzzum. I'd try to do it, but my tung would kerwollup up agin the roof of my mouth & stick thar, like deth to a deseast Afrikan or a country postmaster to his offiss, while my hart whanged agin my ribs like a old fashioned wheat Flaje agin a barn door.

'Twas a carm still nite in Joon. All nater was husht and nary zeffer disturbed the screen silens. I sot with Betsy Jane on the fense of her farther's pastur. We'd been rompin threw the woods, kullin flours & drivin the woodchuck from his Nativ Lair (so to speak) with long sticks. Wall we sot thar on the fense, a swingin our feet two and fro, blushin as red as the Baldinsville skool house when it was fust painted, and lookin very simple, I make no doubt. My left arm was ockepied in ballunsin myself on the fense, while my rite was woundid luviny round her waste.

I cleared my throat and tremblinly sed, "Betsy, you're a Gazelle."

I though that air was putty fine. I waited to see what effeck it would hav upon her. It evidently didn't fetch her, for she up and sed:

"You're a sheep!"

Sez I, "Betsy, I think very muchly of you."

"I don't b'leeve a word you say—so there now, cum!" with which obsarvashun she hitched away from me.

"I wish thar was winders to my Sole," sed I, "so that you could see some of my feelins. There's fire enuff in here," sed I, strikin my buzzum with my fist, "to bile all the corn beef and turnips in the naberhood. Versoovius and the Critter ain't a circumstans!"

She bowd her hed down and commenst chawin the strings to her sunbonnet.

"Ar could you know the sleeplis nites I worry threw with on your account, how vittles has seized to be attractiv to me, & how my lims has shrunk up, you wouldn't dowt me. Gase on this wastin form and these 'cre sunken checks—"

I should have continnered on in this strane probly for sum time, but unfortnitly I lost my ballunse and fell over into the pastur kersmash, tearin my close and severly damagin myself ginerally.

Betsy Jane sprung to my assistance in dubble quick time and dragged me 4th. Then drawin herself up to her full hite she sed:

"I won't listen to your noncents no longer. Jes say rite strate out what you're drivin at. If you mean getting hitched, I'M IN!"

I considered that air enuff for all practical purpusses, and we proceeded immejitly to the parson's & was made 1 that very nite.

* * *

I've parst threw many tryin ordeels sins then, but Betsy Jane has bin troo as steel. By attendin strickly to bizniss I've amarsed a handsum Pittance. No man on this foot-stool can rise & git up & say I ever knowinly injered no man or wimmin folks, while all agree that my Show is ekalled by few and exceld by none, embracin as it does a wonderful colleckshun of livin wild Beests of Pray, snaix in grate profushun, a endliss variety of life-size wax figgers, & the only traned kangaroo in Amerika—the most amoozin little cus ever introjuced to a discriminatin public.

The Arkansas Traveler

A LOST and bewildered Arkansas Traveler approaches the cabin of a Squatter, about forty years ago, in search of lodgings, and the following dialogue ensues:

DIALOGUE

TRAVELER.—Halloo, stranger.

SQUATTER.—Hello yourself.

T.—Can I get to stay all night with you?

S.—No, sir, you can't git to—

T.—Have you any spirits here?

S.—Lots uv 'em; Sal seen one last night by that ar ole hollar gum, and it nearly skeered her to death.

T.—You mistake my meaning; have you any liquor?

S.—Had some yesterday, but Ole Bosc he got in and lapped all uv it out'n the pot.

T.—You don't understand; I don't mean pot liquor. I'm wet and cold and want some whisky. Have you got any?

S.—Oh, yes—I drunk the last this mornin'.

T.—I'm hungary; havn't had a thing since morning; can't you give me something to eat?

S.—Hain't a durned thing in the house. Not a mouffull uv meat, nor a dust uv meal here.

From *The Arkansas Traveler*, by B. S. Alford. Published in *A Treasury of American Folklore*, edited by B. A. Botkin, Crown Publishers.

- T.—Well, can't you give my horse something?
S.—Got nothin' to feed him on.
T.—How far is it to the next house?
S.—Stranger! I don't know, I've never been thar.
T.—Well, do you know who lives here?
S.—Yes sir!
T.—As I'm so bold, then, what might your name be?
S.—It might be Dick, and it might be Tom; but it lacks right smart uv it.
T.—Sir! will you tell me where this road goes to?
S.—It's never gone any whar since I've lived here; it's always thar when I git up in the mornin'.
T.—Well, how far is it to where it forks?
S.—It don't fork at all; but it splits up like the devil.
T.—As I'm not likely to get to any other house to-night, can't you let me sleep in yours; and I'll tie my horse to a tree, and do without anything to eat or drink?
S.—My house leaks. Thar's only one dry spot in it, and me and Sal sleeps on it. And that thar tree is the old woman's persimmon; you can't tie to it, 'caze she don't want 'em shuk off. She 'lows to make beer out'n um.
T.—Why don't you finish covering your house and stop the leaks?
S.—It's been rainin' all day.
T.—Well, why don't you do it in dry weather?
S.—It don't leak then.
T.—As there seems to be nothing alive about your place but children, how do you do here anyhow?
S.—Putty well, I thank you, how do you do yourself?
T.—I mean what do you do for a living here?
S.—Keep tavern and sell whisky.
T.—Well, I told you I wanted some whisky.
S.—Stranger, I bought a bar'l more'n a week ago. You see, me and Sal went shars. After we got it here, we only had a bit betweenst us, and Sal she didn't want to use hern fust, nor me mine. You see I had a spiggin in one eend, and she in tother. So she takes a drink out'n my eend, and pays me the bit for it; then I'd take un out'n hern, and give her the bit. Well,

we's getting long fust-rate, till Dick, durned skulking skunk, he born a hole on the bottom to suck at, and the next time I went to buy a drink, they wont none thar.

T.—I'm sorry your whisky's all gone; but, my friend, why don't you play the balance of that tune?

S.—It's got no balance to it.

T.—I mean you don't play the whole of it.

S.—Stranger, can you play the fiddul?

T.—Yes, a little, sometimes.

S.—You don't look like a fiddlur, but ef you think you can play any more onto that thar tune, you kin just try it.

(The Traveler takes the fiddle and plays the whole of it.)

S.—Stranger, tuck a half a duzen cheers and sot down. Sal, stir yourself round like a six-horse team in a mud hold. Go round in the hollar whar I killed that buck this mornin', cut off some of the best pieces, and fotch it and cook it for me and this gentleman, d'rectly. Raise up the board under the head of the bed, and get the ole black jug I hid from Dick, and gin us some whisky; I know thar's some left yit. Til, drive ole Bose out'n the bread-tray, then climb up in the loft, and git the rag that's got the sugar tied in it. Dick, carry the gentleman's hoss round under the shead, give him some fodder and corn; much as he kin eat.

TIL.—Dad, they ain't knives enuff for to sot the table.

S.—Wha's big butch, little butch, ole case, cob-handle, granny's knife, and the one I handled yesterday! That's nuff to sot any gentleman's table, outer you've lost um. Durn me, stranger, ef you can't stay as long as you please, and I'll give you plenty to eat and to drink. Will you have coffey for supper?

T.—Yes, sir.

S.—I'll be hanged if you do, tho', we don't have nothin' that way here, but Grub Hyson,* and I reckon it's mighty good with sweetnin'. Play away, stranger, you kin sleep on the dry spot tonight.

T.—(After about two hours' fiddling.) My friend, can't you tell me about the road I'm to travel to-morrow?

S.—To-morrow! Stranger, you won't git out'n these diggins for

* Sassafras tea.

six weeks. But when it gits so you kin start, you see that big sloo over thar? Well, you have to git crost that, then you take the road up the bank, and in about a mile you'll come to a two-acre-and-a-half corn-patch. The corn's mityly in the weeds, but you needn't mind that: jist ride on. About a mile and a half or two miles from thar, you'll cum to the damdest swamp you ever struck in all your travels; it's boggy enouff to mire a saddle-blanket. Thar's a fust rate road about six feet under thar.

T.—How am I to get at it?

S.—You can't git at it nary time, till the weather stiffens down sum. Well, about a mile beyant, you come to a place whar thar's no roads. You kin take the right hand ef you want to; you'll foller it a mile or so, and you'll find it's run out; you'll then have to come back and try the left; when you git about two miles on that, you may know you're wrong, fur they ain't any road thar. You'll then think you're mity lucky ef you kin find the way back to my house, whar you kin cum and play on thata'r tune as long as you please.

How "Ruby" Played

(JUD BROWNIN, when visiting New York, goes to hear [Anton] Rubinstein, and gives the following description of his playing.)

Well, sir, he had the blamedest, biggest, catty-cornerdest pianner you ever laid eyes on; somethin' like a distracted billiard-table on three legs. The lid was hoisted, and mighty well it was. If it hadn't been, he'd 'a' tore the entire inside clean out and shattered 'em to the four winds of heaven.

Played well? You bet he did; but don't interrupt me. When he first sit down he 'peared to keer mighty little 'bout playin' and wisht he hadn't come. He tweedle-leedled a little on a treble, and twoodle-oodled some on the base,—just foolin' and boxin' the thing's jaws for bein' in his way. And I says to a man sittin' next to me, says I, "What sort of fool playin' is that?" And he says, "Heishl!" But presently his hands commenced chasin' one another up and down the keys, like a passel of rats scamperin' through a garret very swift. Parts of it was sweet, though, and reminded me of a sugar squirrel turnin' the wheel of a candy cage.

"Now," I says to my neighbor, "he's showin' off. He thinks he's a-doin' of it, but he ain't got no idee, no plan of nothin'. If he'd play me a tune of some kind or other, I'd—"

But my neighbor says, "Heishl!" very impatient.

From *Oddities of Southern Life and Character*, edited by Henry Watterson; reprinted by permission of Houghton Mifflin Company.

I was just about to git up and go home, bein' tired of that foolishness, when I heard a little bird waking up away off in the woods and call sleepy-like to his mate, and I looked up and see that Rubin was beginning to take some interest in his business, and I sit down again. It was the peep of day. The light came faint from the east, the breezes blowed gentle and fresh, some more birds waked up in the orchard, then some more in the trees near the house, and all begun singin' together. People began to stir, and the gal opened the shutters. Just then the first beam of the sun fell upon the blossoms a leetle more, and it techt the roses on the bushes, and the next thing it was broad day; the sun fairly blazed, the birds sung like they'd split their little throats; all the leaves was movin', and flashin' diamonds of dew, and the whole wide world was bright and happy as a king. Seemed to me like there was a good breakfast in every house in the land, and not a sick child or woman anywhere. It was a fine mornin'.

And I says to my neighbor, "That's music, that is."

But he glared at me like he'd like to cut my throat.

Presently the wind turned; it begun to thicken up, and a kind of gray mist came over things; I got low-spirited directly. Then a silver rain began to fall. I could see the drops touch the ground; some flashed up like long pearl ear-rings, and the rest rolled away like round rubies. It was pretty, but melancholy. Then the pearls gathered themselves into long strands and necklaces, and then they melted into thin silver streams, running between golden gravels, and then the streams joined each other at the bottom of the hill, and made a brook that flowed silent, except that you could kinder see the music, especially when the bushes on the banks moved as the music went along down the valley. I could smell the flowers in the meadow. But the sun didn't shine, nor the birds sing: it was a foggy day, but not cold.

The most curious thing was the little white angel-boy, like you see in pictures, that run ahead of the music brook and led it on, and on, away out of the world, where no man ever was, certain, I could see the boy just as plain as I see you. Then the moonlight came, without any sunset, and shone on the graveyards, where some few ghosts lifted their hands and went over the wall, and between the black, sharp-top trees splendid marble

houses rose up, with fine ladies in the lit-up windows, and men that loved 'em, but could never get anigh 'em, who played on guitars under the trees, and made me that miserable I could have cried, because I wanted to love somebody, I don't know who, better than the men with the guitars did.

Then the sun went down, it got dark, the wind moaned and wept like a lost child for its dead mother, and I could 'a' got up then and there and preached a better sermon than any I ever listened to. There wasn't a thing in the world left to live for, not a blame thing, and yet I didn't want the music to stop one bit. It was happier to be miserable than to be happy without being miserable. I couldn't understand it. I hung my head and pulled out my handkerchief, and blowed my nose loud to keep me from cryin'. My eyes is weak anyway; I didn't want anybody to be a-gazin' at me a-sniv'lin', and it's nobody's business what I do with my nose. It's mine. But some several glared at me mad as blazes. Then, all of a sudden, old Rubin changed his tune. He ripped out and he rared, he tipped and he tared, he pranced and he charged like the grand entry at a circus. 'Peared to me that all the gas in the house was turned on at once, things got so bright, and I hilt up my head, ready to look any man in the face, and not afraid of nothin'. It was a circus and a brass band and a big ball all goin' on at the same time. He lit into them keys like a thousand of brick; he give 'em no rest day or night; he set every livin' joint in me a-goin', and, not bein' able to stand it no longer, I jumped spang onto my seat, and jest hollered,—

"Go it, my Rube!"

Every blame man, woman and child in the house riz on me, and shouted, "Put him out! put him out!"

"Put your great-grandmother's grizzly gray greenish cat into the middle of next month!" I says. "Tech me if you dare! I paid my money, and you jest come anigh me!"

With that some several policemen run up, and I had to simmer down. But I would 'a' fit any fool that laid hands on me, for I was bound to hear Ruby out or die.

He had changed his tune again. He hop-light ladies and tip-toed fine from end to end of the key-board. He played soft and low and solemn. I heard the church bells over the hills. The

candles of heaven was lit, one by one; I saw the stars rise. The great organ of eternity began to play from the world's end to the world's end, and all the angels went to prayers. . . . Then the music changed to water, full of feeling that couldn't be thought, and began to drop—drip, drop—drip, drop, clear and sweet, like tears of joy falling into a lake of glory. It was sweeter than that. It was as sweet as a sweet-heart sweetened with white sugar mixed with powdered silver and seed-diamonds. It was too sweet. I tell you the audience cheered. Rubin he kinder bowed, like he wanted to say, "Much obleeged, but I'd rather you wouldn't interrupt' me."

He stopped a moment or two to catch breath. Then he got mad. He run his fingers through his hair, he shoved up his sleeve, he opened his coat-tails a leetle further, he drug up his stool, he leaned over, and, sir, he just went for that old pianner. He slapped her face, he boxed her jaws, he pulled her nose, he pinched her ears, and he scratched her cheeks, until she fairly yelled. He knocked her down and he stamped on her shameful. She bellowed like a bull, she bleated like a calf, she howled like a hound, she squealed like a pig, she shrieked like a rat, and *then* he wouldn't let her up. He run a quarter stretch down the low grounds of the base, till he got clean in the bowels of the earth, and you heard thunder galloping after thunder through the hollows and caves of perdition; and then he fox-chased his right hand with his left till he got' way out of the treble into the clouds, whar the notes was finer than the p'int of cambric needles, and you couldn't hear nothin' but the shadders of 'em. And *then* he wouldn't let the old pianner go. He for'ard two'd, he crost over first gentleman, he chassade right and left, back to your places, he all hands'd aroun', ladies to the right, promenade all, in and out, here and there, back and forth, up and down, perpetual motion, double twisted and turned and tacked and tangled into forty-eleven thousand double bow-knots.

By jinks! it was a mixtery. And then he wouldn't let the old pianner go. He fetcht up his right wing, he fetcht up his left wing, he fetcht up his center, he fetcht up his reserves. He fired by file, he fired by platoons, by company, by regiments, and by brigades. He opened his cannon,—siege-guns down thar, Napoleons here, twelve-pounders younder,—big guns, little guns,

middle-sized guns, round shot, shells, shrapnels, grape, canister, mortar, mines and magazines, every livin' battery and bomb a-goin' at the same time. The house trembled, the lights danced, the walls shuk, the floor come up, the ceilin' come down, the sky split, the ground rocked—heavens and earth, creation, sweet potatoes, Moses, ninepences, glory, tenpenny nails, Samson in a 'simmon-tree, Tump Tompson in a tumbler-cart, roodle-oodle-oodle-oodle-ruddle-uddle-uddle-uddle — raddle-addle-eeidle — riddle-iddle-iddle-iddle — reedle-eedle-eeidle-eeidle — p-r-r-r-r-lank! Bang!!! lang!perlang! p-r-r-r-r-r!! Bang!!!!

With that bang! he lifted himself bodily into the a'r, and he come down with his knees, his ten fingers, his ten toes, his elbows, and his nose, striking every single solitary key on the pianner at the same time. The thing busted and went off into seventeen hundred and fifty-seven thousand five hundred and forty-two hemi-demi-semi-quivers, and I know'd no mo'.

When I come to, I were under ground about twenty foot, in a place they call Oyster Bay, treatin' a Yankee that I never laid my eyes on before and never expect to ag'in. Day was breakin' by the time I got to the St. Nicholas Hotel, and I pledge you my word I did not know my name. The man asked me the number of my room, and I told him, "Hot music on the half-shell for twol"

The Purple Cow

*Reflections on a Mythic Beast,
Who's Quite Remarkable, at Least.*

I never Saw a Purple Cow;
I never Hope to See One;
But I can Tell you, Anyhow,
I'd rather See than Be One.

Cinq Ans Apres.

*(Confession: and a Portrait, Too,
Upon a Background that I Rue!)*

Ah, yes! I wrote the "Purple Cow"—
I'm Sorry, now, I Wrote it!
But I can Tell you, Anyhow,
I'll Kill you if you Quote it!

This selection, and the "Nonsense Verses," which follow, are reprinted by permission of Mr. Gelett Burgess.

Nonsense Verses

I

The Window has Four little panes:
But One have I;
The Window-Panes are in its sash,—
I wonder why!

II

My Feet they haul me'round the House;
They hoist me up the Stairs;
I only have to steer them and
They ride me everywhere.

III

Remarkable truly, is Art!
See—Elliptical wheels on a Cart!
It looks very fair
In the Picture up there;
But imagine the Ride when you start!

IV

I'd rather have fingers than Toes;
I'd rather have Ears than a Nose;
And as for my hair,
I'm glad it's all there,
I'll be awfully sad when it goes!

V

I wish that my Room had a floor;
I don't so much care for a Door,
But this walking around
Without touching the ground
Is getting to be quite a bore!

Mr. Stiver's Horse

THE other morning at breakfast Mrs. Perkins observed that Mr. Stiver, in whose house we live, had been called away, and wanted to know if I would see to his horse through the day.

I knew that Mr. Stiver owned a horse, because I occasionally saw him drive out of the yard, and I saw the stable every day,—but what kind of a horse I didn't know. I never went into the stable, for two reasons: in the first place, I had no desire to; and, secondly, I didn't know as the horse cared particularly for company.

I never took care of a horse in my life; and, had I been of a less hopeful nature, the charge Mr. Stiver had left with me might have had a very depressing effect; but I told Mrs. Perkins I would do it.

"You know how to take care of a horse, don't you?" said she.

I gave her a reassuring wink. In fact, I knew so little about it that I didn't think it safe to converse more fluently than by winks.

After breakfast I seized a toothpick and walked out towards the stable. There was nothing particular to do, as Stiver had given him his breakfast, and I found him eating it; so I looked around. The horse looked around, too, and stared pretty hard at me. There was but little said on either side. I hunted up the location of the feed, and then sat down on a peck measure and fell to studying the beast. There is a wide difference in horses.

From *Life in Danbury*, by James Montgomery Bailey.

Some of them will kick you over and never look around to see what becomes of you. I don't like a disposition like that, and I wondered if Stiver's horse was one of them.

When I came home at noon I went straight to the stable. The animal was there all right. Stiver hadn't told me what to give him for dinner, and I had not given the subject any thought; but I went to the oat-box and filled the peck measure and sallied boldly up to the manger.

When he saw the oats he almost smiled; this pleased and amused him. I emptied them into the trough, and left him above me to admire the way I parted my hair behind. I just got my head up in time to save the whole of it. He had his ears back, his mouth open, and looked as if he were on the point of committing murder. I went out and filled the measure again, and climbed up the side of the stall and emptied it on top of him. He brought his head up so suddenly at this that I immediately got down, letting go of everything to do it. I struck on the sharp edge of a barrel, rolled over a couple of times, then disappeared under a hay-cutter. The peck measure went down on the other side, and got mysteriously tangled up in that animal's heels, and he went to work at it, and then ensued the most dreadful noise I ever heard in all my life, and I have been married eighteen years.

It did seem as if I never would get out from under that hay-cutter; and all the while I was struggling and wrenching myself and the cutter apart, that awful beast was kicking around in the stall, and making the most appalling sound imaginable.

When I got out I found Mrs. Perkins at the door. She had heard the racket, and had sped out to the stable, her only thought being of me and three stove-lids which she had under her arm, and one of which she was about to fire at the beast.

This made me mad.

"Go away, you unfortunate idiot!" I shouted: "Do you want to knock my brains out?" For I remembered seeing Mrs. Perkins sling a missile once before, and that I nearly lost an eye by the operation, although standing on the other side of the house at the time.

She retired at once. And at the same time the animal quieted

down, but there was nothing left of that peck measure, not even the maker's name.

I followed Mrs. Perkins into the house, and had her do me up, and then I sat down in a chair and fell into a profound strain of meditation. After a while I felt better, and went out to the stable again. The horse was leaning against the stable stall, with eyes half closed, and appeared to be very much engrossed in thought.

"Step off to the left," I said, rubbing his back.

He didn't step. I got the pitchfork and punched him in the leg with the handle. He immediately raised up both hind legs at once, and that fork flew out of my hands, and went rattling up against the timbers above, and came down again in an instant, the end of the handle rapping me with such force on the top of the head that I sat right down on the floor under the impression that I was standing in front of a drug-store in the evening. I went back to the house and got some more stuff on me. But I couldn't keep away from that stable. I went out there again. The thought struck me that what the horse wanted was exercise. If that thought had been an empty glycerin-can, it would have saved a windfall of luck for me.

But exercise would tone him down, and exercise him I should. I laughed to myself to think how I would trounce him around the yard. I didn't laugh again that afternoon. I got him unhitched, and then wondered how I was to get him out of the stall without carrying him out. I pushed, but he wouldn't budge. I stood looking at him in the face, thinking of something to say, when he suddenly solved the difficulty by veering about and plunging for the door. I followed, as a matter of course, because I had a tight hold on the rope, and hit about every partition-stud worth speaking of on that side of the barn. Mrs. Perkins was at the window and saw us come out of the door. She subsequently remarked that we came out skipping like two innocent children. The skipping was entirely unintentional on my part. I felt as if I stood on the verge of eternity. My legs may have skipped, but my mind was filled with awe.

I took the animal out to exercise him. He exercised me before I got through with it. He went around a few times in a circle;

then he stopped suddenly, spread out his forelegs, and looked at me. Then he leaned forward a little, and hoisted both hind legs, and threw about two coal-hods of mud over a line full of clothes Mrs. Perkins had just hung out.

That excellent lady had taken a position at the window, and, whenever the evolutions of the awful beast permitted, I caught a glance of her features. She appeared to be very much interested in the proceedings; but the instant that the mud flew, she disappeared from the window, and a moment later she appeared on the stoop with a long poker in her hand, and fire enough in her eye to heat it red-hot.

Just then Stiver's horse stood up on his hind legs and tried to hug me with the others. This scared me. A horse never shows his strength to such advantage as when he is coming down on you like a frantic pile-driver. I instantly dodged, and the cold sweat fairly boiled out of me.

It suddenly came over me that I had once figured in a similar position years ago. My grandfather owned a little white horse that would get up from a meal at Delmonico's to kick the President of the United States. He sent me to the lot one day, and unhappily suggested that I often went after that horse and suffered all kinds of defeat in getting him out of the pasture, but I had never tried to ride him. Heaven knows I never thought of it. I had my usual trouble with him that day. He tried to jump over me, and push me down in a mud-hole, and finally got up on his hind legs and came waltzing after me with facilities enough to convert me into hash, but I turned and just made for that fence with all the agony a prospect of instant death could crowd into me. If our candidate for the Presidency had run one-half as well, there would be seventy-five postmasters in Danbury to-day, instead of one.

I got him out finally, and then he was quiet enough, and I took him up alongside the fence and got on him. He stopped an instant, one brief instant, and then tore off down the road at a frightful speed. I lay down on him and clasped my hands tightly around his neck, and thought of my home. When we got to the stable I was confident he would stop, but he didn't. He drove straight at the door. It was a low door, just high enough to permit him to go in at lightning speed, but, there was no

room for me. I saw if I struck that stable the struggle would be a very brief one. I thought this all over in an instant, and then, spreading out my arms and legs, emitted a scream, and the next moment I was bounding about in the filth of that stable-yard. All this passed through my mind as Stiver's horse went up into the air. It frightened Mrs. Perkins dreadfully.

"Why, you old fool!" she said; "why don't you get rid of him?"

"How can I?" said I, in desperation.

"Why, there are a thousand ways," said she.

This is just like a woman. How differently a statesman would have answered!

But I could think of only two ways to dispose of the beast. I could either swallow him where he stood and then sit down on him, or I could crawl inside of him and kick him to death.

But I was saved either of these expedients by his coming towards me so abruptly that I dropped the rope in terror, and then he turned about, and, kicking me full of mud, shot for the gate, ripping the clothes-line in two, and went on down the street at a horrible gallop, with two of Mrs. Perkins' garments, which he hastily snatched from the line, floating over his neck in a very picturesque manner.

So I was afterwards told. I was too full of mud myself to see the way into the house.

Stiver got his horse all right, and stays at home to care for him. Mrs. Perkins has gone to her mother's to recuperate, and I am healing as fast as possible.

PORTE CRAYON
(DAVID HUNTER STROTHER)

The Squire

THE squire himself was the type of a class found only among the rural population of our Southern States—a class, the individuals of which are connected by a general similarity of position and circumstance, but present a field to the student of man infinite in variety, rich in originality.

As the isolated oak that spreads his umbrageous top in the meadow surpasses his spindling congener of the forest, so does the country gentleman, alone in the midst of his broad estate, outgrow the man of crowds and conventionalities in our cities. The oak may have the advantage in the comparison, as his locality and consequent superiority are permanent. The squire, out of his own district, we ignore. Whether intrinsically, or simply in default of comparison, at home he is invariably a great man. Such, at least, was Squire Hardy. Sour and cynical in speech, yet overflowing with human kindness; contemning luxury and expense in dress and equipage, but princely in his hospitality; praising the olden time to the disparagement of the present; the mortal foe of progressionists and fast people in every department; above all, a philosopher of his own school, he judged by the law of Procrustes, and permitted no appeals; opinionated and arbitrary as the Czar, he was sauced by his negroes, respected and

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loved by his neighbors, led by the nose by his wife and daughters, and the abject slave of his grandchildren.

His house was as big as a barn, and, as his sons and daughters married, they brought their mates home to the old mansion. "It will be time enough for them to hive," quoth the Squire, "when the old box is full."

Notwithstanding his contempt for fast men nowadays, he is rather pleased with any allusion to his own youthful reputation in that line, and not unfrequently tells a good story on himself. We can not omit one told by a neighbor, as being characteristic of the times and manners forty years ago:

At Culpepper Court-house, or some court-house thereabout, Dick Hardy, then a good-humored, gay young bachelor, and the prime favorite of both sexes, was called upon to carve the pig at the court dinner. The district judge was at the table, the lawyers, justices, and everybody else that felt disposed to dine. At Dick's right elbow sat a militia colonel, who was tricked out in all the pomp and circumstance admitted by his rank. He had probably been engaged on some court-martial, imposing fifty-cent fines on absentees from the last general muster. Howbeit Dick, in thrusting his fork into the back of the pig, bespattered the officer's regimentals with some of the superfluous gravy. "Beg your pardon," said Dick, as he went on with his carving. Now these were times when the war spirit was high, and chivalry at a premium. "Beg your pardon" might serve as a napkin to wipe the stain from one's honor, but did not touch the question of the greased and spotted regimentals.

The colonel, swelling with wrath, seized a spoon, and deliberately dipping it into the gravy, dashed it over Dick's prominent shirt-frill.

All saw the act, and with open eyes and mouth sat in astonished silence, waiting to see what would be done next. The outraged citizen calmly laid down his knife and fork, and looked at his frill, the officer, and the pig, one after another. The colonel, unmindful of the pallid countenance and significant glances of the burning eye, leaned back in his chair, with arms akimbo, regarding the young farmer with cool disdain. A murmur of surprise and indignation arose from the congregated guests.

Dick's face turned red as a turkey-gobbler's. He deliberately took the pig by the hind legs, and with a sudden whirl brought it down upon the head of the unlucky officer. Stunned by the squashing blow, astounded and blinded with streams of gravy and wads of stuffing, he attempted to rise, but blow after blow from the fat pig fell upon his bewildered head. He seized a carving-knife and attempted to defend himself with blind but ineffectual fury, and at length, with a desperate effort, rose and took to his heels. Dick Hardy, whose wrath waxed hotter and hotter, followed, belaboring him unmercifully at every step, around the table, through the hall, and into the street, the crowd shouting and applauding.

We are sorry to learn that among this crowd were lawyers, sheriffs, magistrates, and constables; and that even his honor the judge, forgetting his dignity and position, shouted in a loud voice, "Give it to him, Dick Hardy! There's no law in Christendom against basting a man with a roast pig!" Dick's weapon failed before his anger; and when at length the battered colonel escaped into the door of a friendly dwelling, the victor had nothing in his hands but the hind legs of the roaster. He re-entered the dining-room flourishing these over his head, and venting his still unappeased wrath in great oaths.

The company reassembled, and finished their dinner as best they might. In reply to a toast, Hardy made a speech, wherein he apologized for sacrificing the principal dinner-dish, and, as he expressed it, for putting public property to private uses. In reply to this speech a treat was ordered. In those good old days folks were not so virtuous but that a man might have cakes and ale without being damned for it, and it is presumable the day wound up with a spree.

After the squire got older, and a family grew up around him, he was not always victorious in his contests. For example, a question lately arose about the refurnishing of the house. On their return from a visit to Richmond the ladies took it into their heads that the parlors looked bare and old-fashioned, and it was decided by them in secret conclave that a change was necessary.

"What!" said he, in a towering passion, "isn't it enough that you spend your time and money in vinegar to sour sweet peaches, and your sugar to sweeten crab-apples, that you must turn the

house you were born in topsy-turvy? God help us! We've a house with windows to let the light in, and you want curtains to keep it out; we've plastered the walls to make them white, and now you want to paste blue paper over them; we've waxed floors to walk on, and we must pay two dollars a yard for a carpet to save the oak plank! Begone with your nonsense, ye demented jades!"

The squire smote the oak floor with his heavy cane, and the rosy petitioners fled from his presence laughing. In due time, however, the parlors were furnished with carpets, curtains, paper, and all the fixtures of modern luxury. The ladies were, of course, greatly delighted; and while professing great aversion and contempt for the "tawdry lumber," it was plain to see that the worthy man enjoyed their pleasure as much as they did the new furniture.

On another occasion, too, did the doughty squire suffer defeat under circumstances far more humiliating, and from an adversary far less worthy.

The western horizon was blushing rosy red at the coming of the sun, whose descending chariot was hidden by the thick Indian-summer haze that covered lowland and the mountain as it were with a violet-tinted veil. This was the condition of things (we were going to say) when Squire Hardy sallied forth, charged with a small bag of salt, for the purpose of looking after his farm generally, and particularly of salting his sheep. It was an interesting sight to see the old gentleman, with his dignified, portly figure, marching at the head of a long procession of improved breeds—the universally-received emblems of innocence and patience. Barring his modern costume, he might have suggested to the artist's mind a picture of one of the Patriarchs.

Having come to a convenient place, or having tired himself crying *co-nan, co-nan*, at the top of his voice, the squire halted. The black ram halted, and the long procession of ewes and well-grown lambs moved up in a dense semicircle, and also halted, expressing their pleasure at the expected treat by gentle bleatings. The squire stooped to spread the salt. The black ram, either from most uncivil impatience, or mistaking the movement of the proprietor's coat-tail for a challenge, pitched into him incontinently. "*Plenum sed*," as the Oxonions say. An attack from

behind, so sudden and unexpected, threw the squire sprawling on his face into a stone pile.

Oh, never was the thunder's jar,
The red tornado's wasting wing,
Or all the elemental war,

like the fury of Squire Hardy on that occasion.

He recovered his feet with the agility of a boy, his nose bleeding and a stone in each hand. The timid flock looked all aghast, while the audacious offender, so far from having shown any disposition to skulk, stood shaking his head and threatening, as if he had a mind to follow up the dastardly attack. The squire let fly one stone, which grazed the villain's head and killed a lamb. With the other he crippled a favorite ewe. The ram still showed fight, and the vengeful proprietor would probably have soon decimated his flock had not Porte Crayon (who had been squirrel-shooting) made his appearance in time to save them.

"Quick, quick! young man—your gun; let me shoot the cursed brute on the spot."

The squire was frantic with rage, the cause of which our hero, having seen something of the affray, easily divined. He was unwilling, however, to trust his hair-triggered piece in the hands of his excited host.

"By your leave, Squire, and by your orders, I'll do the shooting myself. Which of them was it?"

"The ram—the d—d black ram—kill him—shoot—don't let him live a minute!"

Crayon leveled his piece and fired. The offender made a bound and fell dead, the black blood spouting from his forehead in a stream as thick as your thumb.

"There, now," exclaimed the squire, with infinite satisfaction, "you've got it, you ungrateful brute! You've found something harder than your own head at last, you cursed reptile! Friend Crayon, that's a capital gun of yours, and you shot well."

The squire dropped the stones which he had in his hands, and looking back at the dead body of the belligerent sheep, observed, with a thoughtful air, "He was a fine animal, Mr. Crayon—a fine animal, and this will teach him a good lesson."

"In all likelihood," replied Crayon, dryly, "it will break him of this trick of butting."

Not long after this occurrence, Squire Hardy went to hear an itinerant phrenologist who lectured in the village. In the progress of his discourse, the lecturer, for purposes of illustration, introduced the skulls of several animals, mapped off in the most correct and scientific manner.

"Observe, ladies and gentlemen, the head of the wolf: combativeness enormously developed, alimentiveness large, while conscientiousness is entirely wanting. On the other hand, look at this cranium. Here combativeness is a nullity—absolutely wanting—while the fullness of the sentimental organs indicate at once the mild and peaceful disposition of the sheep."

The squire, who had listened with great attention up to this point, hastily rose to his feet.

"A sheep!" he exclaimed; "did you call a sheep a peaceful animal? I tell you, sir, it is the most ferocious and unruly beast in existence. Sir, I had a ram once—"

"My dear sir," cried the astonished lecturer, "on the authority of our most distinguished writers, the sheep is an emblem of peace and innocence."

"An emblem of the devil," interrupted the squire, boiling over. "You are an ignorant impostor, and your science a humbug. I had a ram once that would have taught you more in five seconds than you've learned from books in all your lifetime."

And so Squire Hardy put on his hat and walked out, leaving the lecturer to rectify his blunder as best he might.

The Genial Idiot Discusses the Music Cure

"Good morning, Doctor," said the Idiot as Capsule, M.D., entered the dining-room. "I am mighty glad you've come. I've wanted for a long time to ask you about this music cure that everybody is talking about and get you if possible to write me out a list of musical nostrums for every day use. I noticed last night before going to bed that my medicine chest was about run out. There's nothing but one quinine pill and a soda-mint drop in it, and if there's anything in the music cure I don't think I'll have it filled again. I prefer Wagner to squills, and compared to the delights of Mozart, Haydn and Offenbach those of paregoric are nil."

"Still rambling, eh?" vouchsafed the Doctor. "You ought to submit your tongue to some scientific student of dynamics. I am inclined to think, from my own observation of its ways, that it contains the germ of perpetual motion."

"I will consider your suggestion," replied the Idiot. "Meanwhile, let us consult harmoniously together on the original point. Is there anything in this music cure, and is it true that our Medical Schools are hereafter to have conservatories attached to them in which aspiring young M.D.'s are to be taught the *materia medica*?"

"I had heard of no such idiotic proposition," returned the Doctor. "And as for the music cure I don't know anything about

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it. Haven't heard everybody talking about it, and doubt the existence of any such thing outside of that mysterious realm which is bounded by the four corners of your own bright particular cerebellum. What do you mean by the music cure?"

"Why, the papers have been full of it lately," explained the Idiot. "The claim is made that in music lies the panacea for all human ills. It may not be able to perform a surgical operation like that which is required for the removal of a leg, and I don't believe even Wagner ever composed a measure that could be counted on successfully to eliminate one's vermiform appendix from its chief sphere of usefulness, but for other things, like measles, mumps, the snuffles, or indigestion, it is said to be wonderfully efficacious. What I wanted to find out from you was just what composers were best for which specific troubles."

"You'll have to go to somebody else for the information," said the Doctor. "I never heard of the theory and, as I said before, I don't believe anybody else has, barring your own sweet self."

"I have seen a reference to it somewhere," put in Mr. Whitechoker, coming to the Idiot's rescue. "As I recall the matter, some lady had been cured of a nervous affection by a scientific application of some musical poultice or other, and the general expectation seems to be that some day we shall find in music a cure for all our human ills, as the Idiot suggests."

"Thank you, Mr. Whitechoker," said the Idiot gratefully. "I saw that same item and several others besides, and I have only told the truth when I say that a large number of people are considering the possibilities of music as a substitute for drugs. I am surprised that Doctor Capsule has neither heard nor thought about it, for I should think it would prove to be a pleasant and profitable field for speculation. Even I who am only a dabbler in medicine, and know no more about it than the effects of certain remedies upon my own symptoms, have noticed that music of a certain sort is a sure emollient for nervous conditions."

"For example?" said the Doctor. "Of course we don't doubt your word, but when a man makes a statement based upon personal observation it is profitable to ask him what his precise experience has been merely for the purpose of adding to our own knowledge."

"Well," said the Idiot, "the first instance that I can recall is

that of a Wagner Opera and its effects upon me. For a number of years I suffered a great deal from insomnia. I could not get two hours of consecutive sleep and the effect of my sufferings was to make me nervous and irritable. Suddenly somebody presented me with a couple of tickets for a performance of *Parsifal* and I went. It began at five o'clock in the afternoon. For twenty minutes all went serenely and then the music began to work. I fell into a deep and refreshing slumber. The intermission came, and still I slept on. Everybody else went home, dressed for the evening part of the performance, had their dinner, and returned. Still I slept and continued so to do until midnight when one of the gentlemanly ushers came and waked me up and told me that the performance was over. I rubbed my eyes and looked about me. It was true, the great auditorium was empty, and was gradually darkening. I put on my hat and walked out refreshed, having slept from five twenty until twelve, or six hours and forty minutes, straight. That was one instance. Two weeks later I went again, this time to hear *Die Goetherdammerung*. The results were the same, only the effect was instantaneous. The curtain had hardly risen before I retired to the little ante-room of the box our party occupied and dozed off into a fathomless sleep. I didn't wake up this time until nine o'clock the next day, the rest of the party having gone off without awakening me, as a sort of joke. Clearly Wagner, according to my way of thinking, then deserves to rank among the most effective narcotics known to modern science. I have tried all sorts of other things—sulfonal, trional, bromide powders, and all the rest and not one of them produced anything like the soporific results that two doses of Wagner brought about in one instant, and best of all there was no reaction. No splitting headache or shaky hand the next day, but just the calm, quiet, contented feeling that goes with the sense of having got completely rested up."

"You ran a dreadful risk, however," said the Doctor, with a sarcastic smile. "The Wagner habit is a terrible thing to acquire, Mr. Idiot."

"That may be," said the Idiot. "Worse than the sulfonal habit by a great deal I am told, but I am in no danger of becoming a victim to it while it costs from five to seven dollars a dose. In

addition to this experience I have also the testimony of a friend of mine who was cured of a frightful attack of the colic by Sullivan's *Lost Chord* played on a cornet. He had spent the day down at Asbury Park and had eaten not wisely but too copiously. Among other things that he turned loose in his inner man were two plates of Lobster Salade, a glass of fresh cider and a saucerful of pistache ice-cream. He was a painter by profession and the color scheme he thus introduced into his digestive apparatus was too much for his artistic soul. He was not fitted by temperament to assimilate anything quite so strenuously chromatic as that, and as a consequence shortly after he had retired to his studio for the night the conflicting tints began to get in their deadly work and within two hours he was completely doubled up. The pain he suffered was awful. Agony was bliss alongside of the pangs that now afflicted him and all the palliatives and pain killers known to man were tried without avail, and then, just as he was about to give himself up for lost, an amateur cornetist who occupied a studio on the floor above began to play the *Lost Chord*. A counter-pain set in immediately. At the second bar of the *Lost Chord* the awful pain that was gradually gnawing away at his vitals seemed to lose its poignancy in the face of the greater suffering, and physical relief was instant. As the musician proceeded the internal disorder yielded gradually to the external and finally passed away entirely, leaving him so far from prostrated that by one A.M. he was out of bed and actually girding himself with a shot-gun and an Indian Club to go upstairs for a physical encounter with the cornetist."

"And you reason from this that Sullivan's *Lost Chord* is a cure for *Cholera morbus*, eh?" sneered the Doctor.

"It would seem so," said the Idiot. "While the music continued my friend was a well man ready to go out and fight like a warrior, but when the cornetist stopped—the colic returned and he had to fight it out in the old way. In these episodes in my own experience I find ample justification for my belief and that of others that some day the music cure for human ailments will be recognized and developed to the full. Families going off to the country for the summer instead of taking a medicine-chest along with them will go provided with a music-box with cylinders for mumps,

measles, summer complaint, whooping-cough, chicken-pox, chills and fever and all the other ills the flesh is heir to. Scientific experiment will demonstrate before long what composition will cure specific ills. If a baby has whooping-cough, an anxious mother, instead of ringing up the Doctor, will go to the piano and give the child a dose of *Hiawatha*. If a small boy goes swimming and catches a cold in his head and is down with a fever, his nurse, an expert on the accordion, can bring him back to health again with three bars of *Under the Bamboo Tree* after each meal. Instead of dosing kids with cod liver oil when they need a tonic, they will be set to work at a mechanical piano and braced up on *Narcissus*. *There'll Be a Hot Time in the Old Town Tonight* will become an effective remedy for a sudden chill. People suffering from sleeplessness can dose themselves back to normal conditions again with Wagner the way I did. Tchaikowski, to be well Tshaken before taken, will be an effective remedy for a torpid liver, and the man or woman who suffers from lassitude will doubtless find in the lively airs of our two-step composers an efficient tonic to bring their vitality up to a high standard of activity. Nothing in it? Why, Doctor, there's more in it that's in sight to-day that is promising and suggestive of great things in the future than there was of the principle of gravitation in the rude act of that historic pippin that left the parent tree and swatted Sir Isaac Newton on the nose."

"And the drug stores will be driven out of business, I presume," said the Doctor.

"No," said the Idiot. "They will substitute music for drugs, that is all. Every man who can afford it will have his own medical phonograph or music-box, and the drug stores will sell cylinders and records for them instead of quinine, carbonate of soda, squills, paregoric and other nasty tasting things they have now. This alone will serve to popularize sickness and instead of being driven out of business their trade will pick up."

"And the Doctor? And the Doctor's gig and all the appurtenances of his profession—what becomes of them?" demanded the Doctor.

"We'll have to have the Doctor just the same to prescribe for us, only he will have to be a musician, but the gig—I'm afraid that will have to go," said the Idiot.

"And why, pray?" asked the Doctor. "Because there are no more drugs must the physician walk?"

"Not at all," said the Idiot. "But he'd be better equipped if he drove about in a piano-organ, or if he preferred an auto on a steam calliope."

The Owl-Critic

"Who stuffed that white owl?" No one spoke in the shop,
The barber was busy, and he couldn't stop;
The customers, waiting their turns, were all reading
The "Daily," the "Herald," the "Post," little heeding
The young man who blurted out such a blunt question;
Not one raised a head, or even made a suggestion;
And the barber kept on shaving.

"Don't you see, Mr. Brown,"
Cried the youth, with a frown,
"How wrong the whole thing is,
How preposterous each wing is
How flattened the head is, how jammed down the neck is—
In short, the whole owl, what an ignorant wreck 'tis!
I make no apology;
I've learned owl-eology.
I've passed days and nights in a hundred collections,
And can not be blinded to any deflections
Arising from unskilful fingers that fail
To stuff a bird right, from his beak to his tail.
Mister Brown! Mister Brown!
Do take that bird down,
Or you'll soon be the laughing-stock all over town!"
And the barber kept on shaving.

From *Ballads and Other Poems*, by James T. Fields; reprinted by permission of Houghton Mifflin Company.

"I've *studied* owls,
And other night-fowls,
And I tell you
What I know to be true;
An owl can not roost
With his limbs so unloosed;
No owl in this world
Ever had his claws curled,
Ever had his legs slanted,
Ever had his bill canted,
Ever had his neck screwed
Into that attitude.
He can't *do* it, because
'Tis against all bird-laws.
Anatomy teaches,
Ornithology preaches,
An owl has a toe
That *can't* turn out so!
I've made the white owl my study for years,
And to see such a job almost moves me to tears!
Mr. Brown, I'm amazed
You should be so gone crazed
As to put up a bird
In that posture absurd!
To *look* at that owl really brings on a dizziness;
The man who stuffed *him* don't half know his business!"
And the barber kept on shaving.

"Examine those eyes.
I'm filled with surprise
Taxidermists should pass
Off on you such poor glass;
So unnatural they seem
They'd make Audubon scream,
And John Burroughs laugh
To encounter such chaff.
Do take that bird down;
Have him stuffed again, Brown!"
And the barber kept on shaving.

"With some sawdust and bark
I could stuff in the dark
An owl better than that.
I could make an old hat
Look more like an owl
Than that horrid fowl,
Stuck up there so stiff like a side of coarse leather.
In fact, about *him* there's not one natural feather."

Just then, with a wink and a sly normal lurch,
The owl, very gravely, got down from his perch,
Walked round, and regarded his fault-finding critic
(Who thought he was stuffed) with a glance analytic,
And then fairly hooted, as if he should say:
"Your learning's at fault *this* time, anyway;
Don't waste it again on a live bird, I pray.
I'm an owl; you're another. Sir Critic, good day!"
And the barber kept on shaving.

Grandma Keeler Gets Grandpa Ready for Sunday-School

SUNDAY morning nothing arose in Wallencamp save the sun.

At least, that celestial orb had long forgotten all the roseate flaming of his youth, in an honest, straightforward march through the heavens, ere the first signs of smoke came curling lazily up from the Wallencamp chimneys.

I had retired at night, very weary, with the delicious consciousness that it wouldn't make any difference when I woke up the next morning, or whether, indeed, I woke at all. So I opened my eyes leisurely and lay half-dreaming, half-meditating on a variety of things.

I deciphered a few of the texts on the scriptural patchwork quilt which covered my couch. There were—"Let not your heart be troubled," "Remember Lot's wife," and "Philander Keeler," traced in inky hieroglyphics, all in close conjunction.

Finally I reached out for my watch, and, having ascertained the time of day, I got up and proceeded to dress hastily enough, wondering to hear no signs of life in the house.

I went noiselessly down the stairs. All was silent below, except for the peaceful snoring of Mrs. Philander and the little Keelers, which was responded to from some remote western corner of the Ark by the triumphant snores of Grandma and Grandpa Keeler.

I attempted to kindle a fire in the stove, but it sizzled a little while, spitefully, as much as to say, "What, Sunday morning?

From *Cape Cod Folks*, by Sarah P. McLean Greene.

Not II" and went out. So I concluded to put on some wraps and go out and warm myself in the sun.

I climbed the long hill back of the Ark, descended, and walked along the bank of the river. It was a beautiful morning. The air was—everything that could be desired in the way of air, but I felt a desperate need of something more substantial.

Standing alone with nature, on the bank of the lovely river, I thought, with tears in my eyes, of the delicious breakfast already recuperating the exhausted energies of my far-away home friends.

When I got back to the house, Mrs. Philander, in simple and unaffected attire, was bustling busily about the stove.

The snores from Grandma and Grandpa's quarter had ceased, signifying that they, also, had advanced a stage in the grand process of Sunday morning.

The children came teasing me to dress them, so I fastened for them a variety of small articles which I flattered myself on having combined in a very ingenious and artistic manner, though I believe those infant Keelers went weeping to Grandma afterward, and were remodeled by her all-comforting hand with much skill and patience.

In the midst of her preparations for breakfast, Madeline abruptly assumed her hat and shawl, and was seen from the window, walking leisurely across the fields in the direction of the woods. She returned in due time, bearing an armful of fresh evergreens, which she twisted around the family register.

When the ancient couple made their appearance, I remarked silently, in regard to Grandma Keeler's hair, what proved afterward to be its usual holiday morning arrangement. It was confined in six infinitesimal braids which appeared to be sprouting out, perpendicularly, in all directions from her head. The effect of redundancy and expansiveness thus heightened and increased on Grandma's features was striking in the extreme.

While we were eating breakfast, that good soul observed to Grandpa Keeler: "Wall, pa, I suppose you'll be all ready when the time comes to take teacher and me over to West Wallen to Sunday-school, won't ye?"

Grandpa coughed, and coughed again, and raised his eyes helplessly to the window.

"Looks some like showers," said he. "A-hem! a-hem! Looks mightily to me like showers, over yonder."

"Thar', r'aly, husband! I must say I feel mortified for ye," said Grandma. "Seein' as you're a perfessor, too, and thar' ain't been a single Sunday mornin' since I've lived with ye, pa, summer or winter, but what you've seen showers, and it r'aly seems to me it's dreadful inconsistent when thar' ain't no cloud in the sky, and don't look no more like rain than I do." And Grandma's face, in spite of her reproachful tones, was, above all, blandly sunlike and expressive of anything rather than deluge and watery disaster.

Grandpa was silent a little while, then coughed again. I had never seen Grandpa in worse straits.

"A-hem! a-hem! 'Fanny' seems to be a little lame, this mornin'," said he. "I shouldn't wonder. She's been goin' pretty stiddy this week."

"It does beat all, pa," continued Grandma Keeler, "how 't all the horses you've ever had since I've known ye have always been took lame Sunday mornin'. Thar' was 'Happy Jack,' he could go anywhers through the week, and never limp a step, as nobody could see, and Sunday mornin' he was always took lame! And thar' was 'Tantrum'—"

"Tantrum" was the horse that had run away with Grandma when she was thrown from the wagon, and generally smashed to pieces. And now, Grandma branched off into the thrilling reminiscences connected with this incident of her life, which was the third time during the week that the horrible tale had been repeated for my delectation.

When she had finished, Grandpa shook his head with painful earnestness, reverting to the former subject of discussion.

"It's a long jaunt!" said he; "a long jaunt!"

"Thar's a long hill to climb before we reach Zion's mount," said Grandma Keeler, impressively.

"Wall, there's a darned sight harder one on the road to West Wallen!" burst out the old sea-captain desperately; "say nothin' about the devilish stones!"

"Thar' now," said Grandma, with calm though awful reproof; "I think we've gone fur enough for one day; we've broke the

Sabbath, and took the name of the Lord in vain, and that ought to be enough for perfessors."

Grandpa replied at length in a greatly subdued tone: "Wall, if you and the teacher want to go over to Sunday-school to-day, I suppose we can go if we get ready," a long submissive sigh—"I suppose we can."

"They have preachin' service in the mornin', I suppose," said Grandma. "But we don't generally git along to that. It makes such an early start. We generally try to get around, when we go, in time for Sunday-school. They have singin' and all. It's just about as interestin', I think, as preachin'. The old man r'aly likes it," she observed aside to me; "when he once gets started, but he kind o' dreads the gittin' started."

When I beheld the ordeal through which Grandpa Keeler was called to pass, at the hands of his faithful consort, before he was considered in a fit condition of mind and body to embark for the sanctuary, I marveled not at the old man's reluctance, nor that he had indeed seen clouds and tempest fringing the horizon.

Immediately after breakfast, he set out for the barn, ostensibly to "see to the chores;" really, I believe, to obtain a few moments' respite, before worse evil should come upon him.

Pretty soon Grandma was at the back door calling in firm though persuasive tones:

"Husband! husband! come in, now, and get ready."

No answer. Then it was in another key, weighty, yet expressive of no weak irritation, that Grandma called "Come, pa! pa-a! pa-a-a!" Still no answer.

Then that voice of Grandma's sung out like a trumpet, terrible with meaning—"Bijonah Keeler!"

But Grandpa appeared not. Next, I saw Grandma slowly but surely gravitating in the direction of the barn, and soon she returned, bringing with her that ancient delinquent, who looked like a lost sheep indeed and a truly unreconciled one.

"Now the first thing," said Grandma, looking her forlorn captive over; "is boots. Go and get on yer meetin' gaiters, pa."

The old gentleman, having dutifully invested himself with those sacred relics, came pathetically limping into the room.

"I declare, ma," said he; "somehow these things—phew!

Somehow they pinch my feet dreadfully. I don't know what it is,—phew! They're dreadful oncomf'table things somehow."

"Since I've known ye, pa," solemnly ejaculated Grandma Keeler, "you've never had a pair o' meetin' boots that set easy on yer feet. You'd ought to get boots big enough for ye, pa," she continued, looking down disapprovingly on the old gentleman's pedal extremities, which resembled two small scows at anchor in black cloth encasements: "and not be so proud as to go to pinchin' yer feet into gaiters a number o' sizes too small for ye."

"They're number tens, I tell ye!" roared Grandpa nettled outrageously by this cutting taunt.

"Wall, thar', now, pa," said Grandma, soothingly; "if I had sech feet as that, I wouldn't go to spreadin' it all over town, if I was you—but it's time we stopped bickerin' now, husband, and got ready for meetin'; so set down and let me wash yer head."

"I've washed once this mornin'. It's clean enough," Grandpa protested, but in vain. He was planted in a chair, and Grandma Keeler, with rag and soap and a basin of water, attacked the old gentleman vigorously, much as I have seen cruel mothers wash the faces of their earth-begrimed infants. He only gave expression to such groans as:

"Thar', ma! don't tear my ears to pieces! Come, ma! you've got my eyes so full o' soap now, ma, that I can't see nothin'. Phew, Lordy! ain't ye most through with this, ma?"

Then came the dyeing process, which Grandma Keeler assured me, aside, made Grandpa "look like a man o' thirty;" but to me, after it he looked neither old nor young, human nor inhuman, nor like anything that I had ever seen before under the sun.

"There's the lotion, the potion, the dye-er, and the setter," said Grandma, pointing to four bottles on the table. "Now whar's the directions, Madeline?"

These having been produced from between the leaves of the family Bible, Madeline read, while Grandma made a vigorous practical application of the various mixtures.

"This admirable lotion"—in soft ecstatic tones Madeline rehearsed the flowery language of the recipe—"though' not so

instantaneously startling in its effect as our inestimable dyer and setter, yet forms a most essential part of the whole process, opening, as it does, the dry and lifeless pores of the scalp, imparting to them new life and beauty, and rendering them more easily susceptible to the applications which follow. But we must go deeper than this; a tone must be given to the whole system by means of the cleansing and rejuvenating of the very centre of our beings, and, for this purpose, we have prepared our wonderful potion." Here Grandpa, with a wry face, was made to swallow a spoonful of the mixture. "Our unparalleled dyer," Madeline continued, "restores black hair to a more than original gloss and brilliancy, and gives to the faded golden tress the sunny flashes of youth." Grandpa was dyed. "Our world-renowned setter completes and perfects the whole process by adding tone and permanency to the efficacious qualities of the lotion, potion, and dyer, etc.;" while on Grandpa's head the unutterable dye was set.

"Now, read teacher some of the testimonials, daughter," said Grandma Keeler, whose face was one broad, generous illustration of that rare and peculiar virtue called faith.

So Madeline continued: "Mrs. Hiram Briggs, of North Dedham, writes: 'I was terribly afflicted with baldness, so that, for months, I was little more than an outcast from society, and an object of pity to my most familiar friends. I tried every remedy in vain. At length I heard of your wonderful restorative. After a week's application, my hair had already begun to grow in what seemed the most miraculous manner. At the end of ten months it had assumed such length and proportions as to be a most luxurious burden, and where I had before been regarded with pity and aversion, I became the envied and admired of all beholders.'"

"Just think!" said Grandma Keeler, with rapturous sympathy and gratitude, "how that poor creetur must a' felt!"

"'Orion Spaulding, of Weedsville, Vermont,'" Madeline went on—but, here I had to beg to be excused, and went to my room to get ready for the Sunday-school.

When I came down again, Grandpa Keeler was seated, completely arrayed in his best clothes, opposite Grandma, who held the big family Bible in her lap, and a Sunday-school question book in one hand.

"Now, pa," said she; "what tribe was it in sacred writ that wore bunnits?"

I was compelled to infer from the tone of Grandpa Keeler's answer that his temper had not undergone a mollifying process during my absence.

"Come, ma," said he; "how much longer ye goin' to pester me in this way?"

"Why, pa," Grandma rejoined calmly; "until you git a proper understandin' of it. What tribe was it in sacred writ that wore bunnits?"

"Lordy!" exclaimed the old man. "How d'ye suppose I know! They must 'a' been a tarnal old womanish lookin' set anyway."

"The tribe o' Judah, pa," said Grandma, gravely. "Now, how good it is, husband, to have your understandin' all freshened up on the scriptures!"

"Come, come, ma!" said Grandpa, rising nervously. "It's time we was startin'. When I make up my mind to go anywhere I always want to git there in time. If I was goin' to the Old Harry, I should want to git there in time."

"It's my consarn that we shall git thar' before time, some on us," said Grandma, with sad meaning, "unless we larn to use more respec'ful language."

I shall never forget how we set off for church that Sabbath morning, way out at one of the sunny back doors of the Ark: for there was Madeline's little cottage that fronted the highway, or lane, and then there was a long backward extension of the Ark, only one story in height. This belonged peculiarly to Grandma and Grandpa Keeler. It contained the "parlor" and three "keepin'" rooms opening one into the other, all of the same size and general bare and gloomy appearance, all possessing the same sacredly preserved atmosphere, through which we passed with becoming silence and solemnity into the "end" room, the sunny kitchen where Grandma and Grandpa kept house by themselves in the summer time, and there at the door, her very yellow coat reflecting the rays of the sun, stood Fanny, presenting about as much appearance of life and animation as a pensive summer squash.

The carriage, I thought, was a facsimile of the one in which I had been brought from West Wallen on the night of my arrival.

One of the most striking peculiarities of this sort of vehicle was the width at which the wheels were set apart. The body seemed comparatively narrow. It was very long, and covered with white canvas. It had neither windows nor doors, but just the one guarded opening in front. There were no steps leading to this, and, indeed, a variety of obstacles before it. And the way Grandma effected an entrance was to put a chair on a mound of earth and a cricket on top of the chair and thus having climbed up to Fanny's reposeful back she slipped passively down feet foremost to the whiffletree; from thence she easily gained the plane of the carriage floor.

Grandpa and I took a less circuitous, though, perhaps, not less difficult route.

I sat with Grandpa on the "front" seat—it may be remarked that the "front" seat was very much front, and the "back" seat very much back—there was a kind of wooden shelf built outside as a resting-place for the feet, so that while our heads were under cover, our feet were out, utterly exposed to the weather, and we must either lay them on the shelf or let them hang off into space.

Madeline and the children stood at the door to see us off.

"All aboard! ship ballasted! wind fa'r! go ahead thar', Fanny!" shouted Grandpa, who seemed quite restored in spirits, and held the reins and wielded the whip with a masterful air.

He spun sea-yarns, too, all the way—marvelous ones, and Grandma's reproving voice was mellowed by the distance, and so confusedly mingled with the rumbling of the wheels, that it seemed hardly to reach him at all. Not that Grandma looked discomfited on this account, or in bad humor. On the contrary, as she sat back there in the ghostly shadows, with her hands folded, and her hair combed out in resplendent waves on either side of her head, she appeared conscious that every word she uttered was taking root in some obdurate heart. She was, in every respect, the picture of good-will and contentment.

But the face under Grandpa's antiquated beaver began to give me a fresh shock every time I looked up at him, for the light and the air were rapidly turning his rejuvenated locks and his poor, thin fringe of whiskers to an unnatural greenish tint, while his

bushy eyebrows, untouched by the hand of art, shone as white as ever.

In spite of the old sea-captain's entertaining stories, it seemed, indeed, "a long jaunt" to West Wallen.

To say that Fanny was a slow horse would be but a feeble expression of the truth.

A persevering "click! click! click!" began to arise from Grandma's quarter. This annoyed Grandpa exceedingly.

"Shet up, Mal!" he was moved to exclaim at last. "I'm steerin' this craft."

"Click! click! click!" came perseveringly from behind.

"Dum it, mal thar', mal!" cried Grandpa, exasperated beyond measure. "How is this hoss goin' to hear anything that I say ef you keep up such a tarnal cacklin'?"

Just as we were coming out of the thickest part of the woods, about a mile beyond Wallencamp, we discovered a man walking in the distance. It was the only human being we had seen since we started.

"Hullo, there's Lovell!" exclaimed Grandpa. "I was wonderin' why we hadn't overtook him before. We gin'all'y take him in on the road. Yis, yis; that's Lovell, ain't it, teacher?"

I put up my glasses, helplessly.

"I'm sure," I said, "I can't tell, positively. I have seen Mr. Barlow but once, and at that distance I shouldn't know my own father."

"Must be Lovell," said Grandpa. "Yis, I know him! Hullo, thar'! Ship ahoy! ship ahoy!"

Grandpa's voice suggested something of the fire and vigor it must have had when it rang out across the foam of waves and pierced the tempest's roar.

The man turned and looked at us, and then went on again.

"He don't seem to recognize us," said Grandma.

"Ship a-hoy! Ship a-hoy!" shouted Grandpa.

The man turned and looked at us again, and this time he stopped and kept on looking.

When we got up to him we saw that it wasn't Lovell Barlow at all, but a stranger of trampish appearance, drunk and fiery, and fixed in an aggressive attitude.

I was naturally terrified. What if he should attack us in that lonely spot! Grandpa was so old! And moreover, Grandpa was so taken aback to find that it wasn't Lovell that he began some blunt and stammering expression of surprise, which only served to increase the stranger's ire. Grandma, imperturbable soul who never failed to come to the rescue even in the most desperate emergencies—Grandma climbed over to the front, thrust out her benign head, and said in that deep, calm voice of hers:

"We're a goin' to the house of God, brother; won't you git in and go too?"

"Nol" our brother replied, doubling up his fists and shaking them menacingly in our faces: "I won't go to no house o' God. What d'ye mean by overhauling me on the road, and askin' me to git into yer d—d old traveling lunatic asylum?"

"Drive on, pa," said Grandma, coldly. "He ain't in no condition to be labored with now. Drive on kind o' quick!"

"Kind o' quick" we could not go, but Fanny was made to do her best, and we did not pause to look behind.

When we got to the church Sunday-school had already begun. There was Lovell Barlow looking preternaturally stiff in his best clothes, sitting with a class of young men. He saw us when we came in, and gave me a look of deep meaning. It was the same expression—as though there was some solemn, mutual understanding between us—which he had worn on that night when he gave me his picture.

"There's plenty of young folks' classes," said Grandma; "but seein' as we're late maybe you'd jest as soon go right along in with us."

I said that I should like that best, so I went into the "old folks'" class with Grandma and Grandpa Keeler.

There were three pews of old people in front of us, and the teacher, who certainly seemed to me the oldest person I had ever seen, sat in an otherwise vacant pew in front of all, so that, his voice being very thin and querulous, we could hear very little that he said, although we were edified in some faint sense by his pious manner of shaking his head and rolling his eyes toward the ceiling.

The church was a square wooden edifice, of medium size, and contained three stoves all burning brightly. Against this, and

the drowsy effect of their long drive in the sun and wind, my two companions proved powerless to struggle.

Grandpa looked furtively up at Grandma, then endeavored to put on as a sort of apology for what he felt was inevitably coming, a sanctimonious expression which was most unnatural to him, and which soon faded away as the sweet unconsciousness of slumber overspread his features. His head fell back helplessly, his mouth opened wide. He snored, but not very loudly. I looked at Grandma, wondering why her vigilance had failed on this occasion, and lo! her head was falling peacefully from side to side. She was fast asleep, too. She woke up first, however, and then Grandpa was speedily and adroitly aroused by some means, I think it was a pin; and Grandma fed him with bits of unsweetened flagroot, which he munched penitently, though evidently without relish, until he dropped off to sleep again, and she dropped off to sleep again, and so they continued.

But it always happened that Grandma woke up first. And whereas Grandpa, when the avenging pin pierced his shins, recovered himself with a start and an air of guilty confusion, Grandma opened her eyes at regular intervals, with the utmost calm and placidity, as though she had merely been closing them to engage in a few moments of silent prayer.

Plain Language from Truthful James

Which I wish to remark—
And my language is plain—
That for ways that are dark,
And for tricks that are vain,
The heathen Chinese is peculiar,
Which the same I would rise to explain.

Ah Sin was his name,
And I shall not deny
In regard to the same
What that name might imply;
But his smile it was pensive and childlike,
As I frequent remarked to Bill Nye.

It was August the third,
And quite soft was the skies;
Which it might be inferred
That Ah Sin was likewise;
Yet he played it that day upon William
And me in a way I despise.

Which we had a small game,
And Ah Sin took a hand;

This selection is from *Poems*, by Bret Harte; "Melons," which follows, is from *Mrs. Skaggs' Husbands and Other Sketches*, by Bret Harte. Both selections are reprinted by permission of Houghton Mifflin Company.

It was euchre—the same
He did not understand;
But he smiled as he sat at the table
With the smile that was childlike and bland.

Yet the cards they were stocked
In a way that I grieve,
And my feelings were shocked
At the state of Nye's sleeve,
Which was stuffed full of aces and bowers,
And the same with intent to deceive.

But the hands that were played
By that heathen Chineese,
And the points that he made
Were quite frightful to see,
Till at last he put down a right bower,
Which the same Nye had dealt unto me.

Then I looked up at Nye,
And he gazed upon me;
And he rose with a sigh,
And said, "Can this be?
We are ruined by Chinese cheap labor;"
And he went for that heathen Chineese.

In the scene that ensued
I did not take a hand,
But the floor it was strewed
Like the leaves on the strand
With the cards that Ah Sin had been hiding
In the game "he did not understand."

In his sleeves, which were long,
He had twenty-four packs,
Which was coming it strong,
Yet I state but the facts;
And we found on his nails, which were taper,
What is frequent in tapers—that's wax.

Which is why I remark—
And my language is plain—
That for ways that are dark,
And for tricks that are vain,
The heathen Chineese is peculiar,
Which the same I am free to maintain.

Melons

As I do not suppose the most gentle of readers will believe that anybody's sponsors in baptism ever wilfully assumed the responsibility of such a name, I may as well state that I have reason to infer that Melons was simply the nickname of a small boy I once knew. If he had any other, I never knew it.

Various theories were often projected by me to account for this strange cognomen. His head, which was covered with a transparent down, like that which clothes very small chickens, plainly permitting the scalp to show through, to an imaginative mind might have suggested that succulent vegetable. That his parents, recognizing some poetical significance in the fruits of the season, might have given this name to an August child, was an oriental explanation. That from his infancy, he was fond of indulging in melons, seemed on the whole the most likely, particularly as Fancy was not bred in McGinnis's Court. He dawned upon me as Melons. His proximity was indicated by shrill, youthful voices, as "Ah, Melons!" or playfully, "Hi, Melons!" or authoritatively, "You Melons!"

McGinnis's Court was a democratic expression of some obstinate and radical property-holder. Occupying a limited space between two fashionable thoroughfares, it refused to conform to circumstances, but sturdily paraded its unkempt glories, and frequently asserted itself in ungrammatical language. My window—a rear room on the ground floor—in this way derived 'blended light

and shadow from the court. So low was the window-sill that, had I been the least disposed to somnambulism, it would have broken out under such favorable auspices, and I should have haunted McGinnis's Court. My speculations as to the origin of the court were not altogether gratuitous, for by means of this window I once saw the Past, as through a glass darkly. It was a Celtic shadow that early one morning obstructed my ancient lights. It seemed to belong to an individual with a pea-coat, a stubby pipe, and bristling beard. He was gazing intently at the court, resting on a heavy cane, somewhat in the way that heroes dramatically visit the scenes of their boyhood. As there was little of architectural beauty in the court, I came to the conclusion that it was McGinnis looking after his property. The fact that he carefully kicked a broken bottle out of the road somewhat strengthened me in the opinion. But he presently walked away, and the court knew him no more. He probably collected his rents by proxy—if he collected them at all.

Beyond Melons, of whom all this is purely introductory, there was little to interest the most sanguine and hopeful nature. In common with all such localities, a great deal of washing was done, in comparison with the visible results. There was always something whisking on the line, and always something whisking through the court, that looked as if it ought to be there. A fish-geranium—of all plants kept for the recreation of mankind, certainly the greatest illusion—straggled under the window. Through its dusty leaves I caught the first glance of Melons.

His age was about seven. He looked older from the venerable whiteness of his head, and it was impossible to conjecture his size, as he always wore clothes apparently belonging to some shapely youth of nineteen. A pair of pantaloons, that, when sustained by a single suspender, completely equipped him, formed his every-day suit. How, with this lavish superfluity of clothing, he managed to perform the surprising gymnastic feats it has been my privilege to witness, I have never been able to tell. His "turning the crab," and other minor dislocations, were always attended with success. It was not an unusual sight at any hour of the day to find Melons suspended on a line, or to see his venerable head appearing above the roofs of the outhouses. Melons knew the exact height of every fence in the vicinity, its

facilities for scaling, and the possibility of seizure on the other side. His more peaceful and quieter amusements consisted in dragging a disused boiler by a large string, with hideous outcries, to imaginary fires.

Melons was not gregarious in his habits. A few youths of his own age sometimes called upon him, but they eventually became abusive, and their visits were more strictly predatory incursions for old bottles and junk which formed the staple of McGinnis's Court. Overcome by loneliness one day, Melons inveigled a blind harper into the court. For two hours did that wretched man prosecute his unhallowed calling, unrecompensed, and going round and round the court, apparently under the impression that it was some other place, while Melons surveyed him from an adjoining fence with calm satisfaction. It was this absence of conscientious motives that brought Melons into disrepute with his aristocratic neighbors. Orders were issued that no child of wealthy and pious parentage should play with him. This mandate, as a matter of course, invested Melons with a fascinating interest to them. Admiring glances were cast at Melons from nursery windows. Baby fingers beckoned to him. Invitations to tea (on wood and pewter) were lisped to him from aristocratic back-yards. It was evident he was looked upon as a pure and noble being, untrammelled by the conventionalities of parentage, and physically as well as mentally exalted above them. One afternoon an unusual commotion prevailed in the vicinity of McGinnis's Court. Looking from my window I saw Melons perched on the roof of a stable, pulling up a rope by which one "Tommy," an infant scion of an adjacent and wealthy house, was suspended in mid-air. In vain the female relatives of Tommy, congregated in the backyard, expostulated with Melons; in vain the unhappy father shook his fist at him. Secure in his position, Melons redoubled his exertions and at last landed Tommy on the roof. Then it was that the humiliating fact was disclosed that Tommy had been acting in collusion with Melons. He grinned delightedly back at his parents, as if "by merit raised to that bad eminence." Long before the ladder arrived that was to succor him, he became the sworn ally of Melons, and, I regret to say, incited by the same audacious boy, "chaffed" his own flesh and blood below him. He was eventually taken, though, of course,

Melons escaped. But Tommy was restricted to the window after that, and the companionship was limited to "Hi, Melons!" and "You Tommy!" and Melons to all practical purposes, lost him forever. I looked afterward to see some signs of sorrow on Melons's part, but in vain; he buried his grief, if he had any, somewhere in his one voluminous garment.

At about this time my opportunities of knowing Melons became more extended. I was engaged in filling a void in the Literature of the Pacific Coast. As this void was a pretty large one, and as I was informed that the Pacific Coast languished under it, I set apart two hours each day to this work of filling in. It was necessary that I should adopt a methodical system, so I retired from the world and locked myself in my room at a certain hour each day, after coming from my office. I then carefully drew out my portfolio and read what I had written the day before. This would suggest some alterations, and I would carefully rewrite it. During this operation I would turn to consult a book of reference, which invariably proved extremely interesting and attractive. It would generally suggest another and better method of "filling in." Turning this method over reflectively in my mind, I would finally commence the new method which I eventually abandoned for the original plan. At this time I would become convinced that my exhausted faculties demanded a cigar. The operation of lighting a cigar usually suggested that a little quiet reflection and meditation would be of service to me, and I always allowed myself to be guided by prudential instincts. Eventually, seated by my window, as before stated, Melons asserted himself. Though our conversation rarely went further than "Hello, Mister!" and "Ah, Melons!" a vagabond instinct we felt in common implied a communion deeper than words. In this spiritual commingling the time passed, often beguiled by gymnastics on the fence or line (always with an eye to my window) until dinner was announced and I found a more practical void required my attention. An unlooked-for incident drew us in closer relation.

A sea-faring friend just from a tropical voyage had presented me with a bunch of bananas. They were not quite ripe, and I hung them before my window to mature in the sun of McGinnis's Court, whose forcing qualities were remarkable. In the mysteri-

ously mingled odors of ship and shore which they diffused throughout my room, there was lingering reminiscence of low latitudes. But even that joy was fleeting and evanescent: they never reached maturity.

Coming home one day, as I turned the corner of that fashionable thoroughfare before alluded to, I met a small boy eating a banana. There was nothing remarkable in that, but as I neared McGinnis's Court I presently met another small boy, also eating a banana. A third small boy engaged in a like occupation obtruded a painful coincidence upon my mind. I leave the psychological reader to determine the exact co-relation between the circumstance and the sickening sense of loss that overcame me on witnessing it. I reached my room—the bananas were gone.

There was but one that knew of their existence, but one who frequented my window, but one capable of gymnastic effort to procure them, and that was—I blush to say it—Melons. Melons the depredator—Melons, despoiled by larger boys of his ill-gotten booty, or reckless and indiscreetly liberal; Melons—now a fugitive on some neighborhood house-top. I lit a cigar, and, drawing my chair to the window, sought surcease of sorrow in the contemplation of the fish-geranium. In a few moments something white passed my window at about the level of the edge. There was no mistaking that hoary head, which now represented to me only aged iniquity. It was Melons, that venerable, juvenile hypocrite.

He affected not to observe me, and would have withdrawn quietly, but that horrible fascination which causes the murderer to revisit the scene of his crime, impelled him toward my window. I smoked calmly, and gazed at him without speaking. He walked several times up and down the court with a half-rigid, half-belligerent expression of eye and shoulder, intended to represent the carelessness of innocence.

Once or twice he stopped, and putting his arms their whole length into his capacious trousers, gazed with some interest at the additional width they thus acquired. Then he whistled. The singular conflicting conditions of John Brown's body and soul were at that time beginning to attract the attention of youth, and Melon's performance of that melody was always remarkable. But to-day he whistled falsely and shrilly between

his teeth. At last he met my eye. He winced slightly, but recovered himself, and going to the fence, stood for a few moments on his hands, with his bare feet quivering in the air. Then he turned toward me and threw out a conversational preliminary.

"They is a cirkis"—said Melons gravely, hanging with his back to the fence and his arms twisted around the palings—"a cirkis over yonder!"—indicating the locality with his foot—"with hosses, and hossback riders. They is a man wot rides six hosses to onct—six hosses to onct—and nary saddle"—and he paused in expectation.

Even this equestrian novelty did not affect me. I still kept a fixed gaze on Melons's eye, and he began to tremble and visibly shrink in his capacious garment. Some other desperate means—conversation with Melons was always a desperate means—must be resorted to. He recommenced more artfully.

"Do you know Carrots?"

I had a faint remembrance of a boy of that euphonious name, with scarlet hair, who was a playmate and persecutor of Melons. But I said nothing.

"Carrots is a bad boy. Killed a policeman onct. Wears a dirk knife in his boots, saw him to-day looking in your windy."

I felt that this must end here. I rose sternly and addressed Melons.

"Melons, this is all irrelevant and impertinent to the case. You took those bananas. Your proposition regarding Carrots, even if I were inclined to accept it as credible information, does not alter the material issue. You took those bananas. The offense under the Statutes of California is felony. How far Carrots may have been accessory to the fact either before or after, is not my intention at present to discuss. The act is complete. Your present conduct shows the *animo furandi* to have been equally clear."

By the time I had finished this exordium, Melons had disappeared, as I fully expected.

He never reappeared. The remorse that I have experienced for the part I had taken in what I fear may have resulted in his utter and complete extermination, alas, he may not know, except through these pages. For I have never seen him since. Whether he ran away and went to sea to reappear at some future day as

the most ancient of mariners, or whether he buried himself completely in his trousers, I never shall know. I have read the papers anxiously for accounts of him. I have gone to the Police Office in the vain attempt of identifying him as a lost child. But I never saw him or heard of him since. Strange fears have sometimes crossed my mind that his venerable appearance may have been actually the result of senility, and that he may have been gathered peacefully to his fathers in a green old age. I have even had doubts of his existence, and have sometimes thought that he was providentially and mysteriously offered to fill the void I have before alluded to. In that hope I have written these pages.

A Rival Entertainment

I ONCE heard a bright child declare that if circuses were prohibited in heaven, she did not wish to go there. She had been baptized, was under Christian influences, and, previous to this heterodoxy, had never given her good parents a moment's anxiety. Her naïve utterance touched a responsive chord within my own breast, for well did I remember how gloriously the circus shone by the light of other days; how the ring-master, in a wrinkled dress-coat, seemed the most enviable of mortals, being on speaking terms with all the celestial creatures who jumped over flags and through balloons; how the clown was the dearest, funniest of men; how the young athletes in tights and spangles were my *beau-ideals* of masculinity; and how La Belle Rose, with one foot upon her native heath, otherwise a well-padded saddle, and the other pointed in the direction of the sweet little cherubs that sat up aloft, was the most fascinating of her sex. I am persuaded that circuses fill an aching void in the universe. What children did before their invention I shudder to think, for circuses are to childhood what butter is to bread; and what the world did before the birth of Barnum is an almost equally frightful problem. Some are born to shows, others attain shows, and yet again others have shows thrust upon them. Barnum is a born showman. If ever a man fulfills his destiny, it is the discoverer of Tom Thumb. With the majority of men and women life is a failure.

From *Hap-Hazard*, by Kate Field; reprinted by permission of Houghton Mifflin Company.

Not until one leg dangles in the grave is their *raison d'être* disclosed. The round people always find themselves sticking in the square holes, and *vice versa*; but with Barnum we need not deplore a *vie manquée*. We can smile at his reverses, for even the phoenix has cause to blush in his presence. Thought pursued by tongues of fire, Barnum remains invincible when iron, stone, and mortar crumble around him; and while yet the smoke is telling volumes of destruction, the cheery voice of the showman exclaims, "Here you are, gentlemen; admission fifty cents, children half price."

Apropos of Barnum, once in my life I gave myself up to unmitigated joy. Weary of lecturing, singing the song "I would I were a boy again," I went to see the elephant. To speak truly, I saw not one elephant, but half a dozen. I had a feast of roaring and a flow of circus. In fact I indulged in the wildest dissipation. I visited Barnum's circus and sucked peppermint candy in a way most childlike and bland. The reason seems obscure, but circuses and peppermint candy are as inseparable as peanuts and the Bowery. Appreciating this solemn fact, Barnum provides bigger sticks adorned with bigger red stripes than ever Romans sucked in the palmy days of the Coliseum. In the dim distance I mistook them for barbers' poles, but upon direct application I recognized them for my long lost own.

However, let me, like the Germans, begin with the creation. "Here, ladies and gentlemen, is for sale Mr. Barnum's Autobiography, full of interest and anecdote, one of the most charming productions ever issued from the press, 900 pages, thirty-two full-page engravings, reduced from \$3.50 to \$1.50. Every purchaser enters free."

How ordinary mortals can resist buying Barnum's Autobiography for one dollar—such a bargain as never was—is incomprehensible. I believe they can not. I believe they do their duty like men. As one man I resisted, because I belong to the press, and therefore am not mortal. Who ever heard of a journalist getting a bargain? With Spartan firmness I turned a deaf ear to the persuasive music of the propagandist, and entered where hope is all before. I was not staggered by a welcome from all the Presidents of the United States, Fitz-Greene Halleck, General Hooker, and Gratz Brown. These personages are rather woodenly

and red about the face, as though flushed with victories of the platform or the table, but I recognize their fitness in a menagerie. What athlete has turned more somersaults than some of these representative men? What lion has roared more gently than a few of these sucking doves? Barnum's tact in appropriately grouping curiosities, living and dead, is too well known to require comment. Passing what Sam Weller would call "a reg'lar knock-down of intellect," I took my seat high in the air amid a dense throng of my fellow-creatures, and realized how many people it takes to make up the world. What did I see? I saw double. I beheld not one ring but two, in each of which the uncommon variety of man was disporting in an entertaining manner. I felt for these uncommon men. Think what immortal hates must arise from these dual performances! We all like to receive the reward of merit, but when two performances are going on simultaneously, how are the artists to know for whom it is intended? Applause is the sweet compensation for which all strive privately or publicly, and to be cheated out of it, or left in doubt as to its destination, is a refined form of the Inquisition. Fancy the sensations of the man balancing plates on the little end of nothing,—a feat to which he has consecrated his life,—at thought of his neighbor's performance of impossible feats in the air! It would be more than human in both not to wish the other in Jericho, or in some equally remote quarter of the globe. I sympathized with them. I became bewildered in my endeavors to keep one eye on each. If human beings were constructed on the same principles as Janus, and had two faces, a fore-and-aft circus would be convenient; but as nowadays double-faced people only wear two eyes in their heads, the Barnumian conception muddles the intellect. I pray you, great and glorious showman, take pity on your artists and your audiences. Don't drive the former mad and the latter distracted. Remember that insanity is on the increase, and that accommodations in asylums are limited. Take warning before you undermine the reason of an entire continent. Beware! Beware!

I hear much and see more of the physical weakness of woman. Michelet tells the sentimental world that woman is an exquisite invalid, with a perennial headache and nerves perpetually on the rack. It is a mistake. When I gaze upon German and French

peasant-women, I ask Michelet which is right, he or Nature? And since my introduction to Barnum's female gymnast,—a good-looking, well-formed mother of a family, who walks about unflinchingly with men and boys on her shoulders, and carries a 300-pound gun as easily as the ordinary woman carries a clothes-basket,—I have been persuaded that "the coming woman," like Brother Jonathan, will "lick all creation." In that good time, woman will have her rights because she will have her muscle. Then, if there are murders and playful beatings between husbands and wives, the wives will enjoy all the glory of crime. What an outlook! And what a sublime consolation to the present enfeebled race of wives that are having their throats cut and their eyes carved out merely because their biceps have not gone into training! Barnum's female gymnast is an example to her sex. What woman has done woman may do again. Mothers, train up your daughters in the way they should fight, and when they are married they will not depart this life. God is on the side of the stoutest muscle as well as of the heaviest battalions. It is perfectly useless to talk about the equality of the sexes as long as a man can strangle his own mother-in-law.

I was exceedingly thrilled by the appearance of the two young gentlemen from the Cannibal Islands, who are beautifully embossed in green and red, and compassionated them for the sacrifices they make in putting on blankets and civilization. Is it right to deprive them of their daily bread,—I mean their daily baby? Think what self-restraint they must exercise while gazing upon the toothsome infants that congregate at the circus! That they do gaze and smack their overhanging lips I know, because, after going through their cannibalistic dance, they sat behind me and howled in a subdued manner. The North American Indian who occupied an adjoining seat, favored me with a translation of their charming conversation, by which I learned many important facts concerning man as an article of diet. It appears that babies, after all, do not make the daintiest morsels. Tender they are, of course, but, being immature, they have not the rich flavor of a youthful adult. This seems reasonable. Veal is tender, but can it be favorably compared with beef? The cases are parallel. The embossed young men consider babies excellent for *entrees*, but for roasts there is nothing like plump maidens in

their teens. Men of twenty are not bad eating. When older, they are invariably boiled. Commenting upon the audience, the critics did not consider it appetizing; and, strange as it may appear, I felt somewhat hurt by the remark, for who is not vain enough to wish to look good enough to eat? Fancy being shipwrecked off the Fiji Islands, and discarded by cannibals as a tough subject, while your companions are literally killed with attention! Can you not imagine, that, under such circumstances, a peculiar jealousy of the superior tenderness of your friends would be a thorn in the flesh, rendering existence a temporary burden? If we lived among people who adored squinting, should we not all take to it, and cherish it as the apple of our eye? And if we fell among anthropophagi, would not our love of approbation make us long to be as succulent as young pigs? What glory to escape from the jaws of death, if the jaws repudiate us? So long as memory holds a seat in this distracted brain, I shall entertain unpleasant feelings toward the embossed young gentlemen who did not sigh to fasten their affections—otherwise their teeth—on me. It was worse than a crime; it was bad taste.

Roaming among the wild animals, I made the acquaintance of the cassowary, in which I have been deeply interested since childhood's sunny hours, for then 't was oft I sang a touching hymn running thus:

"If I were a cassowary
Far away in Timbuctoo,
I should eat a missionary,
Hat, and boots, and hymn-book too."

From that hour the cassowary occupied a large niche in my heart. The desire to gaze upon a bird capable of digesting food to which even the ostrich never aspired, pursued me by day and tintured my dreams by night. "What you seek for all your life you will come upon suddenly when the whole family is at dinner," says Thoreau. I met the cassowary at dinner. He was dining alone, having left his family in Africa, and I must say that I never met with a greater disappointment. Were it not for the touching intimation of the hymn, I should believe it impossible for him to eat a missionary. A quieter, more amiable bird never stood on two legs. A polite attendant stirred him up

for me, yet his temper and his feathers remained unruffled. Perhaps if our geographical position had changed to Timbuctoo, and I had been a missionary with hymn-book in hand, the cassowary might have realized my expectations. As it was, one more illusion vanished.

In order to regain my spirits, I shook hands with the handsome giant in brass buttons; and speaking of giants leads me to the subject of all *lusus naturæ*, particularly the Circassian young lady, the dwarf, the living skeleton, the Albinos, and What-is-it. I have dropped more than one tear at the fate of these unfortunate beings; for what is more horribly solitary than to live in a strange crowd, with

"No one to love,
None to caress?"

Noah was human. When he retired to the ark, he selected two of a kind from all the animal kingdom for the sake of sociability as well as for more practical purposes. Showmen should be equally considerate. To think of those Albino sisters with never an Albino beau, of the Circassian beauty with never a Circassian sweetheart, of the living skeleton with never another skeleton in his closet (how he can look so good-natured would be most mysterious, were not his digestion pronounced perfect), to think of the wretched What-is-it with never a Mrs. What-is-it, produces unspeakable anguish. May they meet their affinities in another and a more sympathetic world, where monstrosities are impossible for the reason that we leave our bones on earth. Since gazing at the What-is-it, I have become a convert to Darwin. It is too true. Our ancestors stood on their hind legs, and the less we talk about pedigree the better. The noble democrat in search of a coat-of-arms and a grandfather should visit a grand moral circus. Let us assume a virtue, though we have it not; let our pride *ape* humility.

Were I asked which I thought the greater necessity of civilization, lectures or circuses, I should lay my right hand upon my left heart, and exclaim, "Circuses!"

How Mr. Terrapin Lost His Plumage and Whistle

"WELL," said Janey, as Aunt 'Phrony finished telling of the loss of Mr. Terrapin's beard, "I saw a terrapin the other day, and it didn't look as though it ever had had a beard or wattles. I thought it was real ugly."

"Law, chil'," answered the story-teller, "you kain't tell w'at one'r dese yer creeturs bin in de times pas' jes' by lookin' at 'em now. W'y, de day's bin w'en ol' man Tarr'pin wuz plumb harnsum. He done bin trick' out er mo'n jes his by'ud an' wattles, I kin tell you."

"Oh, please *do* tell us!" cried Janey, and little Kit came and leaned on her knees and looked up into her face and echoed, "'Es, please to tell us."

Thus besieged, Aunt 'Phrony consented to tell how the Terrapin lost his plumage and his whistle.

"I done tol' you," said she. "Tarr'pin wuz onct a harnsum man, an' dat de sho'-nuff trufe, fer he had nice, sof' fedders all over his body an' a fine, big, spreadin' tail, an' his eyes wuz mighty bright an' his voice wuz de cle'res' whistle you uver yearn. He wuz a gre't man in dem days, I tell you *dat*, an' his house wuz chock full er all sorts er fine fixin's. He had sof' furs ter set on an' long strings er shells fer money, an' clo'es all imbroider' wid dyed pokkypine quills, an' he had spears an' bows an' arrers an' deer-hawns, an' I dunno w'at all sidesen dat.

From *At the Big House*, by Anne Virginia Culbertson; copyright 1904, 1932 by The Bobbs-Merrill Company.

"In dem days de Quail wuz a homely, no-kyount creetur, wid sca'cely any fedders, an' a shawt, stumpy tail, an' no voice wuf speakin' uv. He wuz po', too, an' nob'dy tuck much notuss uv him, jes' call him 'dat 'ar ol' Bob White,' an' he go wannerin' up an' down de kyountry all by his lonesome.

"One day he come 'long pas' Mistah Tarr'pin's house, an' he peek in thu de do', he did, an' w'en he see all de fine doin's, seem lak he kain't tek his eye 'way f'um de crack. Den he seed Tarr'pin comin' down de road home, an' he 'low ter hisse'f, he did, dat dish yer de harnsumes' man w'at he uver seed, an' he be puffickly sassified ef he cu'd look jes' lak dat. He git mo' an' mo' enviable uv 'im an' tuck ter hangin' 'roun' de naberhood, peekin' an' peerin' in at Tarr'pin w'enuver he git de chanct. Las' he say ter hisse'f dat he jes' natchully 'bleeged ter have dem fedders an' tail an' whustle, but he ain' knowin' jes' how ter git 'em, so he g'long off ter ax de he'p uv a wise ol' Wolf whar live 'way, 'way up on de mountain an' whar wuz one'r dem cunjerers I done tol' you 'bout. Ez he went 'long he wuz fixin' up a tale ter tell Wolf, an' w'en he git ter de kyave whar de cunjerer live he knock an' Wolf 'spon', 'Come in!' in sech a deep, growly voice dat li'l Quail felt kind er skeery, an' he feel mo' skeery yit w'en he go hoppin' in an' see Wolf settin' dar wid bones strowed all 'round him, an' showin' dem long, white toofs er his ev'y time he open his mouf. But he perch hisse'f up in front er Wolf, an' he say in a voice dat wuz right trim'ly, 'Howdy, Uncle Wolf, howdy! I done comed all de way up yer ter ax yo' he'p, 'kase I knows dar ain' nair' man on dis mountain whar knows half ez much ez w'at you does. Please, suh, tell me w'at ter do.'

"'Bob White, you is a li'l ol' fool,' sez Wolf, sezee, 'how kin I tell you w'at ter do w'en you ain't tol' me w'at 'tis you wants?'

"Den Quail he git li'l mo' pearter, an' he try ter mek Wolf feel please', so he say, 'Laws-a-mussy! Uncle Wolf, I done fergit dat, but I reckon I do so 'kase you is dat smart I thought you mought know widout me tellin'.'

"'Drap dat foolishness,' sez Wolf, sezee, 'an' lemme know w'at you comed after.' But all de same he wan't too smart ner too ol' ter feel please' wid de flatt'ry; show me de man whar is; lots uv 'em gits ketched by dat, nuttin' mo' ner less," and here Aunt

'Phrony cast a scornful glance at Nancy, who answered it by a toss of the head.

"Well, den," she resumed, "Quail start inter de meanness he bin hatchin' up, an' he say, sezee, 'Uncle Wolf, deys a man down dar below whar gittin' ter be dangersome. He's rich an' good-lookin', an' a gre't chift an' a sho'-nuff fighter, an' he kin do 'bout w'at he please wid tu'rr creeturs. A man lak dat boun' ter wu'k mischief. Now, suh, ef you sesso, 'pears ter me hit be mighty good notion to tek 'way his good looks an' dat pleasin' voice whar he uses ter 'suade de people wid, an' gin 'em ter some er de quiet an' peace'ble folks whar ain' tall de time stickin' derse'fs ter de front an' tryin' ter lead de people. Now yer I is, you bin knowin' me dis good w'ile, an' you knows my numbility an' submissity, an' ef you mek me de one ter do de deed an' den give me de fixin's fer my trouble, I gwine feel dat I kain't ve'y well refuge 'em.' Right dar he putt his haid on one side an' look up at Wolf mighty meek an' innercent.

"Wolf he say he gwine think 'bout hit, an' he tell Quail ter come back in seven days an' git de arnser. So Quail he go hippitty-hoppin' down de mountains, thinkin' he bin mighty smart, an' wunnerin' ef he kin stan' hit ter wait seven mo' days befo' he rob po' ol' Tarr'pin.

"Wolf he went off higher yit, ter de top er de mountain fer ter ax de 'pinion er seven urr wolfs mo' older an' wiser dan w'at he wuz. Dey talked an' dey 'sputed toge'rr fer seven days an' nights. Den Wolf came back an' Quail made has'e up ter see him ag'in. He say Quail mus't go ter Tarr'pin's house at midnight an' do jes' lak he tell 'im to, er hit be wusser fer him, stidder better. Quail lissen an' say he gwine do jes' lak he tell 'im, an' wid dat he g'long off. Jes' at de stroke er midnight, w'en de bats wuz a-flyin' an' de squinch-owls hootin' an' de jacky-my-lantums trabellin' up an' down, he knock on Mistah Tarr'pin's do' an' gin out dat he wuz a traveller whar comed a fur ways an' wuz pow'ful tired an' hongry.

"Tarr'pin wuz a kin' man, so he 'vited him in an' gin him sump'n ter eat an' drink an' made him set down on de sof' furs, 'kase he felt saw'y fer any pusson so po' an' ugly ez w'at Quail wuz. Den he say, 'You mus' be tired atter yo' journeyin', lemme rub you a w'iles.' He rub de ugly, rough creetur fer so long

time, an' den Quail sez, sezee, 'You sut'n'y is kin', but I ain' wanter tire you out. I is res'ed now, so please, suh, ter leeme rub you a li'l.' He rub an' he rub Tarr'pin wid one han', an' all de time he wuz rubbin' hisse'f wid de urr. Dat-a-way he rub all de fedders offen Tarr'pin onter his own se'f. Den he rub down Tarr'pin's tail 'twel 'twan't nuttin' but a li'l roun', sharp-p'inted stump, an' at de same time he wuz rubbin' his own tail wid tu'rr han' an' puttin' Tarr'pin's fine, spreadin' tail onter his own li'l stump. Hit wuz plumb dark, so't Mistah Tarr'pin ain' see w'at bin done, an' sidesen dat he wuz pow'ful sleepy f'm de rubbin'. Den Quail say he 'bleeged ter lay down 'kase he mus' git him a early start in de mawnin'.

"Befo' sun-up he wuz stirrin' an' he say he mus' be gittin' 'long. Tarr'pin go ter de do' wid him an' den Quail say, sezee, 'Mistah Tarr'pin, I year you has a monst'ous whustle, I lak mighty well ter year hit befo' I go.'

"'W'y sut'n'y,' sez de Tarr'pin, sezee, an' wid dat he whustle long an' loud. Quail lissen at him wid all his years, an' den he say: 'Well, dog my cats, ew I ain' beat! Yo' voice is de prezack match er mine.'

"'You don't sessol lemme year you whustle,' sez Tarr'pin, sezee.

"'Dat I will,' sez Quail, 'but lemme go off li'l ways an' show you how fer I kin mek myse'f yearn,' sezee. He sesso 'kase he'z gittin' mighty 'feerd dat Tarr'pin gwine fin' out his fedders wuz gone. So he go 'way off inter de bushes an' whustle, an' sho' nuff, 'twas jes lak Mistah Tarr'pin's voice. Den Tarr'pin try ter whustle back, but lo, beholst you! his voice clean gone, nuttin' lef' but a li'l hiss, an' hit done stay dat-a-way clean ontwel dis day. 'Twuz gittin' daylight, an' he look down uv a suddint an' dar he wuz! wid nair' a smidgin' uv a fedder on his back. He feel so bad he go inter de house an' cry ontwel his eyes wuz so raid dat dey stayed dat-a-way uver sence.

"Den Mis' Tarr'pin she say, 'Is you a chieft, er is you a ol' ooman? Whyn't you go atter dat man an' gin him a lambastin' an' git back w'at b'long to you?' He feel kind er 'shame', so he pull hisse'f toge'rr an' go out ter see w'at he kin do. 'Fo' long he fin' out dat de cunjerers bin at wu'k, so he know he gotter have he'p, an' he go an' git all tu'rr tarr'pins ter h'ep him.

Dey went ter de ol' wolfs, de cunjerers, an' dey ses: 'We is a slow people an' you is a swif' people, but nemmine dat, we dyar's you-all to a race, an' ef you-all wins, den you kin kill we-all; an' ef we-all wins, den we gwine exescoot you. An' ef you ain't dast ter tek up dis dyar', den ev'yb'dy gwine know you is cowerds.'

"Co'se de wolfs tucken de dyar' up, an' hit wuz 'greed de race wuz ter be over seben mountain ridges, an' dat hit wuz ter be run 'twix' one wolf an' one tarr'pin, de res' ter look on.

"W'en de day come, ol' Tarr'pin he tuck an' fix up dis trick; he git six urr tarr'pins what look jes lak him, an' he hide one away in de bresh on top uv each er de six mountains, an' he hide hisse'f away on top er de sebest'. Jes, befo' Wolf git ter de top er de fus' mountain, de tarr'pin whar wuz hidin' dar crawl outen de bresh an' git ter de top fus' an' gin a whoop, an' went over a li'lways an' hid in de bresh ag'in. Wolf think dat mighty cur'ous, but he keep on, an' 'twuz jesso at ev'y one, an' at de las' ridge co'se Tarr'pin jes' walk hisse'f outen de bresh an' gin a gre't whoop ter let ev'yb'dy know he done won de race.

"Den de tarr'pins mek up der min's ter kill de wolfs by fire, so dey pen 'em all in a big kyave on de mountain an' dey bring bresh an' wood an' pile in front uv hit, a pile mos' ez high ez de mountain, an' den dey set fire to hit, an' de wolfs howl an' de fire hit spit an' sputter an' hiss an' crack an' roar, an' all de creeturs on de mountain set up a big cry an' run dis-a-way an' dat ter git outen de fire; dey wuz plumb 'stracted, an' hit soun' lak all de wil beas'es in creation wuz turnt aloose an' tryin' w'ich kin yell de loudes'. But de tarr'pins jes' drord inter der shells an' sot dar safe an' soun', an' watched de fire burn an' de smoke an' de flame rollin' inter de kyave.

"De wolfs dey howled an' dey howled *an'* dey howled, an' de li'l ones dey cried an' dey cried *an'* dey cried, an' las' de ol' ones felt so bad 'bout de chillen dat dey 'gun ter kill 'em off so's't dey ain' suffer no mo'. W'en de tarr'pins see dat, dey wuz saw'y, an' dey mek up der min's ter let de res' off, so dey turnt 'em aloose f'um de kyave. But lots uv 'em had died in dar, an' dat huccome dar ain' so many wolfs now ez dey useter be. Some wuz nearer ter de fire dan tu'rres an' got swinged, an' some got smoked black, an' dat w'y, ontwel dis day, some wolfs is black an'

some gray an' some white, an' some has longer, bushier tails dan tu'rrs. Dey got so hoarse wid all dat cryin' dat der voices bin nuttin' but a howl uver sence.

"Quail he year w'at gwine on, an' he tucken hiss'f outen dat kyountry fas' ez his laigs cu'd kyar' him, so Tarr'pin nuver got back de fedders ner de whustle, an' ef you goes out inter de fiel' mos' any day you kin see Quail gwine roun' in de stolen fedders an' year him whustle:

'Bob White, do right! do right!

Do right! do right, Bob White!'

jes' ez sassy ez ef *he* bin doin' right all his days, an' ez ef he bin raised wid dat voice stidder stealin' hit way f'um ol' man Tarr'pin."

Wamsley's Automatic Pastor

"YES, sir," said the short, chunky man, as he leaned back against the gorgeous upholstery of his seat in the smoking compartment of the sleeping-car; "yes, sir, I knew you was a preacher the minute I laid eyes on you. You don't wear your collar buttoned behind, nor a black thingumbob over your shirt front, nor Presbyterian whiskers, nor a little gold cross on a black string watch chain; them's the usual marks, I know, and you hain't got any of 'em. But I knew you just the same. You can't fool J. P. Wamsley. You see, there's a peculiar air about a man that's accustomed to handle any particular line of goods. You can tell 'em all, if you'll just notice,—any of 'em,—white-goods counter, lawyer, doctor, travelin' man, politician, railroad,—every one of 'em's got his sign out, and it don't take a Sherlock Holmes to read it, neither. It's the same way with them gospel goods. You'll excuse me, but when I saw you come in here and light a cigar, with an air of I-will-now-give-you-a-correct-imitation-of-a-human-being, I says to myself, 'There's one of my gospel friends.' Murder will out, as the feller says.

"Experience, did you say? I must have had considerable experience? Well, I guess yes! Didn't you never hear of my invention, Wamsley's Automatic Pastor, Self-feedin' Preacher and Lightning Caller? Say, that was the hottest scheme ever. I'll tell you about it.

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"You see, it's this way. I'm not a church member myself—believe in it, you know, and all that sort of thing,—I'm for religion strong, and when it comes to payin' I'm right there with the goods. My wife is a member, and a good one; in fact, she's so blame good that we average up pretty well.

"Well, one day they elected me to the board of trustees at the church; because I was the heaviest payer, I suppose. I kicked some, not bein' anxious to pose as a pious individual, owin' to certain brethren in the town who had a little confidential information on J. P. and might be inclined to get funny. But they insisted, allowin' that me bein' the most prominent and successful merchant in the town, and similar rot, I ought to lineup and help out the cause, and so on; so finally I give in.

"I went to two or three of their meetin's—and say, honest, they were the fiercest things ever."

The minister smiled knowingly.

"You're on, I see. Ain't those official meetin's of a church the limit? Gee! Once I went—a cold winter night—waded through snow knee-deep to a giraffe—and sat there two hours, while they discussed whether they'd fix the pastor's back fence or not—price six dollars! I didn't say anything, bein' sort o' new, you know, but I made up my mind that next time I'd turn loose on 'em, if it was the last thing I did.

"I says to my wife when I got home, 'Em,' says I, 'if gittin' religion gives a man softenin' of the brain, like I see it workin' on them men there to-night, I'm afraid I ain't on prayin' ground and intercedin' terms, as the feller says. The men in that bunch to-night was worth over eight hundred thousand dollars, and they took eleven dollars and a half's worth o' my time chewin' the rag over fixin' the parson's fence. I'm goin' to bed,' I says, 'and if I shouldn't wake up in the mornin', if you should miss petty in the mornin', you may know his vital powers was exhausted by the hilarious proceedin's of this evenin'."

"But I must get along to my story, about my automatic pastor. One day the preacher resigned,—life probably hectored out of him by a lot o' cheap skates whose notion of holdin' office in church consisted in cuttin' down expenses and findin' fault with the preacher because he didn't draw in sinners enough to fill the pews and pay their bills for 'em.

"When it come to selectin' a committee to get a new pastor, I butted right in. I had an idea, so—me to the front, leadin' trumps and bangin' my cards down hard on the table. Excuse my gay and festive reference to playin'-cards, but what I mean is, that I thought the fullness of time had arrived and was a-hollerin' for J. P. Wamsley.

"Well, sir, it was right then and there I invented my automatic pastor, continuous revolving hand-shaker and circular jolly-hander.

"I brung it before the official brethren one night and explained its modus operandi. I had a wax figger made by the same firm that supplies me with the manikins for my show-windows. And it was a peach, if I do say it myself. Tall, handsome figger, benevolent face, elegant smile that won't come off, as the feller says, Chauncey Depew spinnage in front of each ear. It was a sure lu-lu.

"'Now,' I says to 'em, 'gentlemen, speakin' o' pastors, I got one here I want to recommend. It has one advantage anyhow; it won't cost you a cent. I'll make you a present of it, and also chip in, as heretofore, toward operatin' expenses.' That caught old Jake Hicks—worth a hundred thousand dollars, and stingier'n all git-out. He leaned over and listened, same as if he was takin' 'em right off the bat. He's a retired farmer. If you'll find me a closer boy than a retired farmer moved to town, you can have the best plug hat in my store.

"'You observe,' I says, 'that he has the leadin' qualifications of all and comes a heap cheaper than most. He is swivel mounted; that is, the torso, so to speak, is pinioned onto the legs, so that the upper part of the body can revolve. This enables him to rotate freely without bustin' his pants, the vest bein' unconnected with the trousers.

"'Now, you stand this here, whom we will call John Henry, at the door of the church as the congregation enters, havin' previously wound him up, and there he stays, turning around and givin' the glad hand and cheery smile, and so doth his unchangin' power display as the unwearied sun from day to day, as the feller says. Nobody neglected, all pleased. You remember the last pastor wasn't sociable enough, and there was considerable complaint because he didn't hike right down after the

benediction and jolly the flock as they passed out. We'll have a wire run the length of the meetin' house, with a gentle slant from the pulpit to the front door, and as soon as meetin's over, up goes John Henry and slides down to the front exit, and there he stands, gyratin' and handin' out pleasant greeting to all,—merry Christmas and happy New Year to beat the band.

"'Now as for preachin',' I continued, 'you see all you have to do is to raise up the coat-tails and insert a record on the phonograph concealed here in the back of the chest, with a speakin' tube runnin' up to the mouth. John Henry bein' a regular minister, he can get the Homiletic Review at a dollar and a half a year; we can subscribe for that, get the up-to-datest sermons by the most distinguished divines, get some gent that's afflicted with elocution to say 'em into a record, and on Sunday our friend and pastor here will reel 'em off fine. You press the button—he does the rest, as the feller says.'

"'How about callin' on the members?' inquires Andy Robinson.

"'Easy,' says I. 'Hire a buggy of Brother Jinks here, who keeps a livery stable, at one dollar per p.m. Get a nigger to chauffeur the pastor at fifty cents per same. There you are. Let the boy be provided with an assortment of records to suit the people—pleasant and sad, consolatory and gay, encouragin' or reprov'in', and so forth. The coon drives up, puts in a cartridge, sets the pastor in the door, and when the family gets through with him they sets him out again.

"'There are, say about three hundred callin' days in the year. He can easy make fifteen calls a day on an average—equals four thousand five hundred calls a year, at \$50. Of course, there's the records, but they won't cost over \$50 at the outside—you can shave 'em off and use 'em over again, you know.'

"'But there's the personality of the pastor,' somebody speaks up. 'It's that which attracts folks and fills the pews.'

"'Personality shucks!' says I. 'Haven't we had personality enough? For every man it attracts it repels two. Your last preacher was one of the best fellers that ever struck this town. He was a plum brick, and had lots o' horse sense, to boot. He could preach, too, like a house afire. But you kicked him out because he wasn't sociable enough. You're askin' an impossibility.

No man can be a student and get up the rattlin' sermons he did, and put in his time trottin' around callin' on the sisters.

"'Now, let's apply business sense to this problem. That's the way I run my store. Find out what the people want and give it to 'em, is my motto. Now, people ain't comin' to church unless there's somethin' to draw 'em. We've tried preachin', and it won't draw. They say they want sociability, so let's give it to 'em strong. They want attention paid to 'em. You turn my friend here loose in the community, and he'll make each and every man, woman and child think they're it in less'n a month. If anybody gets disgruntled, you sic John Henry here on 'em, and you'll have 'em right back a-runnin', and payin' their pew rent in advance.

"'Then,' I continued, 'that ain't all. There's another idea I propose, to go along with the pastor, as a sort of side line. That's tradin' stamps. Simple, ain't it? Wonder why you never thought of it yourselves, don't you? That's the way with all bright ideas. People drink soda water all their lives, and along comes a genius and hears the fizz, and goes and invents a Westing-house brake. Same as Newton and the apple, and Columbus and the egg.

"'All you have to do is to give tradin' stamps for attendance, and your church fills right up, and John Henry keeps 'em happy. Stamps can be redeemed at any store. So many stamps gets, say a parlor lamp or a masterpiece of Italian art in a gilt frame; so many more draws a steam cooker or an oil stove; so many more and you have a bicycle or a hair mattress or a what-not; and so on up to where a hat full of 'em gets an automobile.

"'I tell you when a family has a what-not in their eye they ain't goin' to let a little rain keep 'em home from church. If they're all really too sick to go they'll hire a substitute. And I opine these here stamps will have a powerful alleviatin' effect on Sunday-sickness.

"'And then,' I went on, waxin' eloquent, and leanin' the pastor against the wall, so I could put one hand in my coat and gesture with the other and make it more impressive,—'and then,' I says, 'just think of them other churches. We won't do a thing to 'em. That Baptist preacher thinks he's a wizz because

he makes six hundred calls a year. You just wait till the nigger gets to haulin' John Henry here around town and loadin' him up with rapid-fire conversations. That Baptist gent will look like thirty cents, that's what he'll look like. He'll think he's Rojessvinsky and the Japanese fleet's after him. And the Campbellites think they done it when they got their new pastor, with a voice like a Bull o' Bashan comin' down hill. Just wait till we load a few of them extra-sized records with megaphone attachment into our pastor, and gear him up to two hundred and fifty words a minute, and then where, oh, where is Mister Campbellite, as the feller says.

"'Besides, brethren, this pastor, havin' no family, won't need his back fence fixed; in fact, he won't need the parsonage; we can rent it, and the proceeds will go toward operatin' expenses.

"'What we need to do,' I says in conclusion, 'is to get in line, get up to date, give the people what they want. We have no way of judgin' the future but by the past, as the feller says. We know they ain't no human bein' can measure up to our requirements, so let's take a fall out of science, and have enterprise and business sense.' "

J. P. Wamsley reached for a match.

"Did they accept your offer?" asked his companion. "I am anxious to know how your plan worked. It has many points in its favor, I confess."

"No," replied J. P. Wamsley, as he meditatively puffed his cigar and seemed to be lovingly reviewing the past. "No, they didn't. I'm kind o' sorry, too. I'd like to have seen the thing tried myself. But," he added, with a slow and solemn wink, "they passed a unanimous resolution callin' back the old pastor at an increased salary."

"I should say, then, that your invention was a success."

"Well, I didn't lose out on it, anyhow. I've got John Henry rigged up with a new bunch of whiskers, and posin' in my show-window as DeWitt, signin' the peace treaty, in an elegant suit of all-wool at \$11.50."

The Ransom of Red Chief

IT LOOKED like a good thing; but wait till I tell you. We were down South, in Alabama—Bill Driscoll and myself—when this kidnapping idea struck us. It was, as Bill afterward expressed it, “during a moment of temporary mental apparition”; but we didn’t find that out till later.

There was a town down there, as flat as a flannel-cake, and called Summit, of course. It contained inhabitants of as undeleterious and self-satisfied a class of peasantry as ever clustered around a Maypole.

Bill and me had a joint capital of about six hundred dollars, and we needed just two thousand dollars more to pull off a fraudulent town-lot scheme in Western Illinois with. We talked it over on the front steps of the hotel. Philprogenitiveness, says we, is strong in semi-rural communities; therefore, and for other reasons, a kidnapping project ought to do better there than in the radius of newspapers that send reporters out in plain clothes to stir up talk about such things. We knew that Summit couldn’t get after us with anything stronger than constables and, maybe, some lackadaisical bloodhounds and a diatribe or two in the *Weekly Farmers’ Budget*. So, it looked good.

We selected for our victim the only child of a prominent citizen named Ebenezer Dorset. The father was respectable and tight, a mortgage fancier and a stern, upright collection-plate
From *Whirligigs*, by O. Henry; copyright 1907 by Doubleday and Company, Inc.

passer and forecloser. The kid was a boy of ten, with bas-relief freckles, and hair the color of the cover of the magazine you buy at the news-stand when you want to catch a train. Bill and me figured that Ebenezer would melt down for a ransom of two thousand dollars to a cent. But wait till I tell you.

About two miles from Summit was a little mountain, covered with a dense cedar brake. On the rear elevation of this mountain was a cave. There we stored provisions.

One evening after sundown, we drove in a buggy past old Dorset's house. The kid was in the street, throwing rocks at a kitten on the opposite fence.

"Hey, little boy!" says Bill, "would you like to have a bag of candy and a nice ride?"

The boy catches Bill neatly in the eye with a piece of brick.

"That will cost the old man an extra five hundred dollars," says Bill, climbing over the wheel.

That boy put up a fight like a welter-weight cinnamon bear; but, at last, we got him down in the bottom of the buggy and drove away. We took him up to the cave, and I hitched the horse in the cedar brake. After dark I drove the buggy to the little village, three miles away, where we had hired it, and walked back to the mountain.

Bill was pasting court-plaster over the scratches and bruises on his features. There was a fire burning behind the big rock at the entrance of the cave, and the boy was watching a pot of boiling coffee, with two buzzard tail-feathers stuck in his red hair. He points a stick at me when I come up, and says:

"Ha! cursed paleface, do you dare to enter the camp of Red Chief, the terror of the plains?"

"He's all right now," says Bill, rolling up his trousers and examining some bruises on his shins. "We're playing Indian. We're making Buffalo Bill's show look like magic-lantern views of Palestine in the town hall. I'm Old Hank, the Trapper, Red Chief's captive, and I'm to be scalped at daybreak. By Geronimo! that kid can kick hard."

Yes, sir, that boy seemed to be having the time of his life. The fun of camping out in a cave had made him forget that he was a captive himself. He immediately christened me Snake-eye, the Spy, and announced that, when his braves returned from the

warpath, I was to be broiled at the stake at the rising of the sun.

Then we had supper; and he filled his mouth full of bacon and bread and gravy, and began to talk. He made a during-dinner speech something like this:

"I like this fine. I never camped out before; but I had a pet 'possum once, and I was nine last birthday. I hate to go to school. Rats ate up sixteen of Jimmy Talbot's aunt's speckled hen's eggs. Are there any real Indians in these woods? I want some more gravy. Does the trees moving make the wind blow? We had five puppies. What makes your nose so red, Hank? My father has lots of money. Are the stars hot? I whipped Ed Walker twice, Saturday. I don't like girls. You dassent catch toads unless with a string. Do oxen make any noise? Why are oranges round? Have you got beds to sleep on in this cave? Amos Murray has got six toes. A parrot can talk, but a monkey or fish can't. How many does it take to make twelve?"

Every few minutes he would remember that he was a pesky redskin, and pick up his stick rifle and tiptoe to the mouth of the cave to rubber for the scouts of the hated paleface. Now and then he would let out a war-whoop that made Old Hank the Trapper shiver. That boy had Bill terrorized from the start.

"Red Chief," says I to the kid, "would you like to go home?"

"Aw, what for?" says he. "I don't have any fun at home. I hate to go to school. I like to camp out. You won't take me back home again, Snake-eye, will you?"

"Not right away," says I. "We'll stay here in the cave awhile."

"All right!" says he. "That'll be fine. I never had such fun in all my life."

We went to bed about eleven o'clock. We spread down some wide blankets and quilts and put Red Chief between us. We weren't afraid he'd run away. He kept us awake for three hours, jumping up and reaching for his rifle and screeching: "Hist! pard," in mine and Bill's ears, as the fancied crackle of a twig or the rustle of a leaf revealed to his young imagination the stealthy approach of the outlaw band. At last, I fell into a troubled sleep, and dreamed that I had been kidnapped and chained to a tree by a ferocious pirate with red hair.

Just at daybreak, I was awakened by a series of awful screams

from Bill. They weren't yells, or howls, or shouts, or whoops, or yawps, such as you'd expect from a manly set of vocal organs—they were simply indecent, terrifying, humiliating screams, such as women emit when they see ghosts or caterpillars. It's an awful thing to hear a strong, desperate, fat man scream incontinently in a cave at day-break.

I jumped up to see what the matter was. Red Chief was sitting on Bill's chest, with one hand twined in Bill's hair. In the other he had the sharp case-knife we used for slicing bacon; and he was industriously and realistically trying to take Bill's scalp, according to the sentence that had been pronounced upon him the evening before.

I got the knife away from the kid and made him lie down again. But, from that moment, Bill's spirit was broken. He laid down on his side of the bed, but he never closed an eye again in sleep as long as that boy was with us. I dozed off for a while, but along toward sun-up I remembered that Red Chief had said I was to be burned at the stake at the rising of the sun. I wasn't nervous or afraid; but I sat up and lit my pipe and leaned against a rock.

"What you getting up so soon for, Sam?" asked Bill.

"Me?" says I. "Oh, I got a kind of pain in my shoulder. I thought sitting up would rest it."

"You're a liar!" says Bill. "You're afraid. You was to be burned at sunrise, and you was afraid he'd do it. And he would, too, if he could find a match. Ain't it awful, Sam? Do you think anybody will pay out money to get a little imp like that back home?"

"Sure," said I. "A rowdy kid like that is just the kind that parents dote on. Now, you and the Chief get up and cook breakfast, while I go up on the top of this mountain and reconnoitre."

I went up on the peak of the little mountain and ran my eyes over the contiguous vicinity. Over towards Summit I expected to see the sturdy yeomanry of the village armed with scythes and pitchforks beating the countryside for the dastardly kidnappers. But what I saw was a peaceful landscape dotted with one man ploughing with a dun mule. Nobody was dragging the creek; no couriers dashed hither and yon, bringing tidings of no news to the distracted parents. There was a sylvan attitude

of somnolent sleepiness pervading that section of the external outward surface of Alabama that lay exposed to my view. "Perhaps," says I to myself, "it has not yet been discovered that the wolves have borne away the tender lambkin from the fold. Heaven help the wolves!" says I, and I went down the mountain to breakfast.

When I got to the cave I found Bill backed up against the side of it, breathing hard, and the boy threatening to smash him with a rock half as big as a cocoanut.

"He put a red-hot boiled potato down my back," explained Bill, "and then mashed it with his foot; and I boxed his ears. Have you got a gun about you, Sam?"

I took the rock away from the boy and kind of patched up the argument. "I'll fix you," says the kid to Bill. "No man ever yet struck the Red Chief but he got paid for it. You better beware!"

After breakfast the kid takes a piece of leather with strings wrapped around it out of his pocket and goes outside the cave unwinding it.

"What's he up to now?" says Bill, anxiously. "You don't think he'll run away, do you, Sam?"

"No fear of it," says I. "He don't seem to be much of a home body. But we've got to fix up some plan about the ransom. There don't seem to be much excitement around Summit on account of his disappearance; but maybe they haven't realized yet that he's gone. His folks may think he's spending the night with Aunt Jane or one of the neighbors. Anyhow, he'll be missed to-day. To-night we must get a message to his father demanding the two thousand dollars for his return."

Just then we heard a kind of war-whoop, such as David might have emitted when he knocked out the champion Goliath. It was a sling that Red Chief had pulled out of his pocket, and he was whirling it around his head.

I dodged, and heard a heavy thud and a kind of a sigh from Bill, like a horse gives out when you take his saddle off. A niggerhead rock the size of an egg had caught Bill just behind his left ear. He loosened himself all over and fell in the fire across the frying pan of hot water for washing the dishes. I dragged him out and poured cold water on his head for half an hour.

By and by, Bill sits up and feels behind his ear and says: "Sam, do you know who my favorite Biblical character is?"

"Take it easy," says I. "You'll come to your senses presently."

"King Herod," says he. "You won't go away and leave me here alone, will you, Sam?"

I went out and caught that boy and shook him until his freckles rattled.

"If you don't behave," says I, "I'll take you straight home. Now, are you going to be good, or not?"

"I was only funning," says he, sullenly. "I didn't mean to hurt Old Hank. But what did he hit me for? I'll behave, Snake-eye, if you won't send me home, and if you'll let me play the Black Scout to-day."

"I don't know the game," says I. "That's for you and Mr. Bill to decide. He's your playmate for the day. I'm going away for a while, on business. Now, you come in and make friends with him and say you are sorry for hurting him, or home you go, at once."

I made him and Bill shake hands, and then I took Bill aside and told him I was going to Poplar Grove, a little village three miles from the cave, and find out what I could about how the kidnapping had been regarded in Summit. Also, I thought it best to send a peremptory letter to old man Dorset that day, demanding the ransom and dictating how it should be paid.

"You know, Sam," says Bill, "I've stood by you without batting an eye in earthquakes, fire and flood—in poker games, dynamite outrages, police raids, train robberies, and cyclones. I never lost my nerve yet till we kidnapped that two-legged skyrocket of a kid. He's got me going. You won't leave me long with him, will you, Sam?"

"I'll be back some time this afternoon," says I. "You must keep the boy amused and quiet till I return. And now we'll write the letter to old Dorset."

Bill and I got paper and pencil and worked on the letter while Red Chief, with a blanket wrapped around him, strutted up and down, guarding the mouth of the cave. Bill begged me tearfully to make the ransom fifteen hundred dollars instead of two thousand. "I ain't attempting," says he, "to decry the celebrated moral aspect of parental affection, but we're dealing with humans,

and it ain't human for anybody to give up two thousand dollars for that forty-pound chunk of freckled wildcat. I'm willing to take a chance at fifteen hundred dollars. You can charge the difference up to me."

So, to relieve Bill, I acceded, and we collaborated a letter that ran this way:

EBENEZER DORSET, ESQ.: We have your boy concealed in a place far from Summit. It is useless for you or the most skilful detectives to attempt to find him. Absolutely, the only terms on which you can have him restored to you are these: We demand fifteen hundred dollars in large bills for his return; the money to be left at midnight to-night at the same spot and in the same box as your reply—as hereinafter described. If you agree to these terms, send your answer in writing by a solitary messenger to-night at half-past eight o'clock. After crossing Owl Creek on the road to Popular Grove, there are three large trees about a hundred yards apart, close to the fence of the wheat field on the right-hand side. At the bottom of the fence-post, opposite the third tree, will be found a small pasteboard box.

The messenger will place the answer in this box and return immediately to Summit.

If you attempt any treachery or fail to comply with our demand as stated, you will never see your boy again.

If you pay the money as demanded, he will be returned to you safe and well within three hours. These terms are final, and if you do not accede to them no further communication will be attempted.

TWO DESPERATE MEN.

I addressed this letter to Dorset, and put it in my pocket. As I was about to start, the kid comes up to me and says:

"Aw, Snake-eye, you said I could play the Black Scout while you was gone."

"Play it, of course," says I. "Mr. Bill will play with you. What kind of a game is it?"

"I'm the Black Scout," says Red Chief, "and I have to ride to the stockade to warn the settlers that the Indians are coming. I'm tired of playing Indian myself. I want to be the Black Scout."

"All right," says I. "It sounds harmless to me. I guess Mr. Bill will help you foil the pesky savages."

"What am I to do?" asks Bill, looking at the kid suspiciously.

"You are the hoss," says Black Scout. "Get down on your hands and knees. How can I ride to the stockade without a hoss?"

"You'd better keep him interested," said I, "till we get the scheme going. Loosen up."

Bill gets down on his all fours, and a look comes in his eye like a rabbit's when you catch it in a trap.

"How far is it to the stockade, kid?" he asks, in a husky manner of voice.

"Ninety miles," says the Black Scout. "And you have to hump yourself to get there on time. Whoa, now!"

The Black Scout jumps on Bill's back and digs his heels in his side.

"For Heaven's sake," says Bill, "hurry back, Sam, as soon as you can. I wish we hadn't made the ransom more than a thousand. Say, you quit kicking me or I'll get up and warm you good."

I walked over to Poplar Grove and sat around the post-office and store, talking with the chaw-bacons that came in to trade. One whiskerando says that he hears Summit is all upset on account of Elder Dorset's boy having been lost or stolen. That was all I wanted to know. I bought some smoking tobacco, referred casually to the price of black-eyed peas, posted my letter surreptitiously, and came away. The post-master said the mail-carrier would come by in an hour to take the mail to Summit.

When I got back to the cave Bill and the boy were not to be found. I explored the vicinity of the cave, and risked a yodel or two, but there was no response.

So I lighted my pipe and sat down on a mossy bank to await developments.

In about half an hour I heard the bushes rustle, and Bill wobbled out into the little glade in front of the cave. Behind him was the kid, stepping softly like a scout, with a broad grin on his face. Bill stopped, took off his hat, and wiped his face with a red handkerchief. The kid stopped about eight feet behind him.

"Sam," says Bill, "I suppose you'll think I'm a renegade, but I couldn't help it. I'm a grown person with masculine proclivities

and habits of self-defense, but there is a time when all systems of egotism and predominance fail. The boy is gone. I sent him home. All is off. There was martyrs in old times," goes on Bill, "that suffered death rather than give up the particular graft they enjoyed. None of 'em ever was subjugated to such supernatural tortures as I have been. I tried to be faithful to our articles of depredation; but there came a limit."

"What's the trouble, Bill?" I asks him.

"I was rode," says Bill, "the ninety miles to the stockade, not barring an inch. Then, when the settlers was rescued, I was given oats. Sand ain't a palatable substitute. And then, for an hour I had to try to explain to him why there was nothin' in holes, how a road can run both ways, and what makes the grass green. I tell you, Sam, a human can only stand so much. I takes him by the neck of his clothes and drags him down the mountains. On the way he kicks my legs black and blue from the knees down; and I've got to have two or three bites on my thumb and hand cauterized.

"But he's gone"—continues Bill—"gone home. I showed him the road to Summit and kicked him about eight feet nearer there at one kick. I'm sorry we lose the ransom; but it was either that or Bill Driscoll to the madhouse."

Bill is puffing and blowing, but there is a look of ineffable peace and growing content on his rose-pink features.

"Bill," says I, "there isn't any heart disease in your family, is there?"

"No," says Bill, "nothing chronic except malaria and accidents. Why?"

"Then you might turn around," says I, "and have a look behind you."

Bill turns and sees the boy, and loses his complexion and sits down plump on the ground and begins to pluck aimlessly at grass and little sticks. For an hour I was afraid of his mind. And then I told him that my scheme was to put the whole job through immediately and that we would get the ransom and be off with it by midnight if old Dorset fell in with our proposition. So Bill braced up enough to give the kid a weak sort of a smile and a promise to play the Russian in a Japanese war with him as soon as he felt a little better.

I had a scheme for collecting that ransom without danger of being caught by counterplots that ought to commend itself to professional kidnappers. The tree under which the answer was to be left—and the money later on—was close to the road fence with big, bare fields on all sides. If a gang of constables should be watching for any one to come for the note, they could see him a long way off crossing the fields or in the road. But no, sirree! At half-past eight I was up in that tree as well hidden as a tree toad, waiting for the messenger to arrive.

Exactly on time, a half-grown boy rides up the road on a bicycle, locates the pasteboard box at the foot of the fence-post, slips a folded piece of paper into it, and pedals away again back toward Summit.

I waited an hour and then concluded the thing was square. I slid down the tree, got the note, slipped along the fence till I struck the woods, and was back at the cave in another half an hour. I opened the note, got near the lantern, and read it to Bill. It was written with a pen in a crabbed hand, and the sum and substance of it was this:

TWO DESPERATE MEN. *Gentlemen:* I received your letter to-day by post, in regard to the ransom you ask for the return of my son. I think you are a little high in your demands, and I hereby make you a counter-proposition, which I am inclined to believe you will accept. You bring Johnny home and pay me two hundred and fifty dollars in cash, and I agree to take him off your hands. You had better come at 'night for the neighbors believe he is lost, and I couldn't be responsible for what they would do to anybody they saw bringing him back. Very respectfully,

EBENEZER DORSET.

"Great pirates of Penzance," says I; "of all the impudent—"

But I glanced at Bill, and hesitated. He had the most appealing look in his eyes I ever saw on the face of a dumb or a talking brute.

"Sam," says he, "what's two hundred and fifty dollars, after all? We've got the money. One more night of this kid will send me to a bed in Bedlam. Besides being a thorough gentleman, I think Mr. Dorset is a spendthrift for making us such a liberal offer. You ain't going to let the chance go, are you?"

"Tell you the truth, Bill," says I, "this little he ewe lamb has somewhat got on my nerves too. We'll take him home, pay the ransom, and make our getaway."

We took him home that night. We got him to go by telling him that his father had bought a silver-mounted rifle and a pair of moccasins for him, and we were to hunt bears the next day.

It was just twelve o'clock when we knocked at Ebenezer's front door. Just at that moment when I should have been abstracting the fifteen hundred dollars from the box under the tree, according to the original proposition, Bill was counting out two hundred and fifty dollars into Dorset's hand.

When the kid found out we were going to leave him at home he started up a howl like a calliope and fastened himself as tight as a leech to Bill's leg. His father peeled him away gradually, like a porous plaster.

"How long can you hold him?" asks Bill.

"I'm not as strong as I used to be," says old Dorset, "but I think I can promise you ten minutes."

"Enough," says Bill. "In ten minutes I shall cross the Central, Southern, and Middle Western States, and be legging it trippingly for the Canadian border."

And, as dark as it was, and as fat as Bill was, and as good a runner as I am, he was a good mile and a half out of Summit before I could catch up with him.

Pigs Is Pigs

MIKE FLANNERY, the Westcote agent of the Interurban Express Company, leaned over the counter of the express office and shook his fist. Mr. Morehouse, angry and red, stood on the other side of the counter, trembling with rage. The argument had been long and heated, and at last Mr. Morehouse had talked himself speechless. The cause of the trouble stood on the counter between the two men. It was a soap box across the top of which were nailed a number of strips, forming a rough but serviceable cage. In it two spotted guinea-pigs were greedily eating lettuce leaves.

"Do as you like, then!" shouted Flannery, "pay for thim an' take thim, or don't pay for thim and leave thim be. Rules is rules, Misther Morehouse, an' Mike Flannery's not goin' to be called down fer breakin' of thim."

"But, you everlastingly stupid idiot!" shouted Mr. Morehouse, madly shaking a flimsy printed book beneath the agent's nose, "can't you read it here—in your own plain printed rates? 'Pets, domestic, Franklin to Westcote, if properly boxed, twenty-five cents each.' " He threw the book on the counter in disgust. "What more do you want? Aren't they pets? Aren't they domestic? Aren't they properly boxed? What?"

He turned and walked back and forth rapidly; frowning ferociously. Suddenly he turned to Flannery, and forcing his

This is the complete text of the book *Pigs Is Pigs*, by Ellis Parker Butler.

voice to an artificial calmness spoke slowly but with intense sarcasm.

"Pets," he said. "P-e-t-s! Twenty-five cents each. There are two of them. One! Two! Two times twenty-five are fifty! Can you understand that? I offer you fifty cents."

Flannery reached for the book. He ran his hand through the pages and stopped at page sixty-four.

"An' I don't take fifty cints," he whispered in mockery. "Here's the rule for ut. 'Whin the agint be in anny doubt regardin' which of two rates applies to a shipmint, he shall charge the larger. The consign-ey may file a claim for the overcharge.' In this case, Mither Morehouse, I be in doubt. Pets thim animals may be, an' domestic they be, but pigs, I'm blame sure they do be, an' me rules says plain as the nose on yer face, 'Pigs, Franklin to Westcote, thirty cints each.' An' Mither Morehouse, by me arithmetical knowledge two times thurty comes to sixty cints."

Mr. Morehouse shook his head savagely.

"Nonsense!" he shouted, "confounded nonsense, I tell you! Why, you poor ignorant foreigner, that rule means common pigs, domestic pigs, not guinea-pigs!"

Flannery was stubborn.

"Pigs is pigs," he declared firmly. "Guinea-pigs, or dago pigs or Irish pigs is all the same to the Interurban Express Company an' to Mike Flannery. Th' nationality of the pig creates no differentiality in the rate, Mither Morehouse! 'Twould be the same was they Dutch pigs or Rooshun pigs. Mike Flannery," he added, "is here to tind to the expriss business an' not to hould conversation wid dago pigs in sivinteen languages fer to discover be they Chinese or Tipperary by birth an' nativity."

Mr. Morehouse hesitated. He bit his lip and then flung out his arms wildly.

"Very well!" he shouted, "you shall hear of this! Your president shall hear of this! It is an outrage! I have offered you fifty cents. You refuse it! Keep the pigs until you are ready to take the fifty cents, but, by George, sir, if one hair of those pigs' heads is harmed I will have the law on you!"

He turned and stalked out, slamming the door. Flannery

carefully lifted the soap box from the counter and placed it in a corner. He was not worried. He felt the peace that comes to a faithful servant who has done his duty and done it well.

Mr. Morehouse went home raging. His boy, who had been awaiting the guinea-pigs, knew better than to ask him for them. He was a normal boy and therefore always had a guilty conscience when his father was angry. So the boy slipped quietly around the house. There is nothing so soothing to a guilty conscience as to be out of the path of the avenger.

Mr. Morehouse stormed into the house.

"Where's the ink?" he shouted at his wife as soon as his foot was across the doorsill.

Mrs. Morehouse jumped, guiltily. She never used ink. She had not seen the ink, nor moved the ink, nor thought of the ink, but her husband's tone convicted her of the guilt of having borne and reared a boy, and she knew that whenever her husband wanted anything in a loud voice the boy had been at it.

"I'll find Sammy," she said meekly.

When the ink was found Mr. Morehouse wrote rapidly, and he read the completed letter and smiled a triumphant smile.

"That will settle that crazy Irishman!" he exclaimed. "When they get that letter he will hunt another job, all right!"

A week later Mr. Morehouse received a long official envelope with the card of the Interurban Express Company in the upper left corner. He tore it open eagerly and drew out a sheet of paper. At the top it bore the number A6754. The letter was short. "Subject—Rate on guinea-pigs," it said, "Dr. Sir—We are in receipt of your letter regarding rate on guinea-pigs between Franklin and Westcote, addressed to the president of this company. All claims for overcharge should be addressed to the Claims Department."

Mr. Morehouse wrote to the Claims Department. He wrote six pages of choice sarcasm, vituperation and argument, and sent them to the Claims Department.

A few weeks later he received a reply from the Claims Department. Attached to it was his last letter.

"Dr. Sir," said the reply. "Your letter of the 16th inst., addressed to this Department, subject rate on guinea-pigs from Franklin to Westcote, rec'd. We have taken up the matter with

our agent at Westcote, and his reply is attached herewith. He informs us that you refused to receive the consignment or to pay the charges. You have therefore no claim against this company, and your letter regarding the proper rate on the consignment should be addressed to our Tariff Department."

Mr. Morehouse wrote to the Tariff Department. He stated his case clearly, and gave his arguments in full, quoting a page or two from the encyclopedia to prove that guinea-pigs were not common pigs.

With the care that characterizes corporations when they are systematically conducted, Mr. Morehouse's letter was numbered, O.K.'d, and started through the regular channels. Duplicate copies of the bill of lading, manifest, Flannery's receipt for the package, and several other pertinent papers were pinned to the letter, and they were passed to the head of the Tariff Department.

The head of the Tariff Department put his feet on his desk and yawned. He looked through the papers carelessly.

"Miss Kane," he said to his stenographer, "take this letter, 'Agent, Westcote, N. J. Please advise why consignment referred to in attached papers was refused domestic pet rates.'"

Miss Kane made a series of curves and angles on her note book and waited with pencil poised. The head of the department looked at the papers again.

"Huh! guinea-pigs!" he said. "Probably starved to death by this time! Add this to that letter: 'Give condition of consignment at present.'"

He tossed the papers on to the stenographer's desk, took his feet from his own desk and went out to lunch.

When Mike Flannery received the letter he scratched his head.

"Give prisint condition," he repeated thoughtfully. "Now what do thim clerks be wantin' to know, I wonder! 'Prisint condition,' is ut? Thim pigs, praise St. Patrick, do be in good health, so far as I know, but I niver was no veterinary surgeon to dago pigs. Mebby thim clerks wants me to call in the pig dochter an' have their pulses took. Wan thing I do know, howiver, which is they've glorious appytites for pigs of their soize. Ate? They'd ate the brass padlocks off of a barn door! If the paddy pig, by the same token, ate as hearty as these dago pigs do, there'd be a famine in Ireland."

To assure himself that his report would be up to date, Flannery went to the rear of the office and looked into the cage. The pigs had been transferred to a larger box—a dry goods box.

"Wan,—two,—t'ree,—four,—foive,—six,—sivin,—eight!" he counted. "Sivin spotted an' wan all black. All well an' hearty an' all eatin loike ragin' hippy-potty-muses." He went back to his desk and wrote.

"Mr. Morgan, Head of Tariff Department," he wrote. "Why do I say dago pigs is pigs because they is pigs and will be til you say they ain't which is what the rule book says stop your jollying me you know it as well as I do. As to health they are all well and hoping you are the same. P.S. There are eight now the family increased all good eaters. P.S. I paid out so far two dollars for cabbage which they like shall I put in bill for same, what?"

Morgan, head of the Tariff Department, when he received this letter, laughed. He read it again and became serious.

"By Georgel" he said, "Flannery is right. 'Pigs is pigs.' I'll have to get authority on this thing. Meanwhile, Miss Kane, take this letter: 'Agent, Wescote, N. J. Regarding shipment guinea-pigs, File No. A6754. Rule 83, General Instruction to Agents, clearly states that agents shall collect from consignee all costs of provender, etc., etc., required for live stock while in transit or storage. You will proceed to collect same from consignee.'"

Flannery received this letter next morning, and when he read it he grinned.

"Proceed to collect," he said softly. "How thim clerks do loike to be talkin'! *Me* proceed to collect two dollars and twenty-foive cints off Mистер Morehouse? I'll git it! Oh, yes! 'Mистер Morehouse, two an' a quarter, plaze.' 'Cert'nly, me dear frind Flannery, Delighted! *Not!*'"

Flannery drove the express wagon to Mr. Morehouse's door. Mr. Morehouse answered the bell.

"Ah, ha!" he cried as soon as he saw it was Flannery. "So you've come to your senses at last, have you? I thought you would! Bring the box in."

"I hev no box," said Flannery coldly. "I hev a bill agin Mистер John C. Morehouse for two dollars and twinty-foive cints for kebbages aten by his dago pigs. Wud you wish to pay ut?"

"Pay—Cabbages—I" gasped Mr. Morehouse. "Do you mean to say that two little guinea-pigs—"

"Eight!" said Flannery. "Papa an' mamma an' the six childer. Eight!"

For answer Mr. Morehouse slammed the door in Flannery's face. Flannery looked at the door reproachfully.

"I take ut the con-sign-y don't want to pay for thim kebbages," he said. "If I know signs of refusal, the con-sign-y refuses to pay for wan dang kebbage leaf an' be hanged to me!"

Mr. Morgan, the head of the Tariff Department, consulted the president of the Interurban Express Company regarding guinea-pigs, as to whether they were pigs or not pigs. The president was inclined to treat the matter lightly.

"What is the rate on pigs and on pets?" he asked.

"Pigs is thirty cents, pets twenty-five," said Morgan.

"Then of course guinea-pigs are pigs," said the president.

"Yes," agreed Morgan, "I look at it that way, too. A thing that can come under two rates is naturally due to be classed as the higher. But are guinea-pigs, pigs? Aren't they rabbits?"

"Come to think of it," said the president, "I believe they are more like rabbits. Sort of half-way station between pig and rabbit. I think the question is this—are guinea-pigs of the domestic pig family? I'll ask Professor Gordon. He is authority on such things. Leave the papers with me."

The president put the papers on his desk and wrote a letter to Professor Gordon. Unfortunately the Professor was in South America collecting zoological specimens, and the letter was forwarded to him by his wife. As the Professor was in the highest Andes, where no white man had ever penetrated, the letter was many months in reaching him. The president forgot the guinea-pigs, Morgan forgot them, Mr. Morehouse forgot them, but Flannery did not. One-half of his time he gave to the duties of his agency; the other half was devoted to the guinea-pigs. Long before Professor Gordon received the president's letter Morgan received one from Flannery.

"About them dago pigs," it said, "what shall I do they are great in family life, no race suicide for them, there are thirty-two now shall I sell them do you take this express office for a menagerie, answer quick."

Morgan reached for a telegraph blank and wrote:

"Agent, Wescote. Don't sell pigs."

He then wrote Flannery a letter calling his attention to the fact that the pigs were not the property of the company but were merely being held during a settlement of a dispute regarding rates. He advised Flannery to take the best possible care of them.

Flannery, letter in hand, looked at the pigs and sighed. The dry-goods box cage had become too small. He boarded up twenty feet of the rear of the express office to make a large and airy home for them, and went about his business. He worked with feverish intensity when out on his rounds, for the pigs required attention and took most of his time. Some months later, in desperation, he seized a sheet of paper and wrote "160" across it and mailed it to Morgan. Morgan returned it asking for explanation. Flannery replied:

"There be now one hundred sixty of them dago pigs, for heavens sake let me sell off some, do you want me to go crazy, what."

"Sell no pigs," Morgan wired.

Not long after this the president of the express company received a letter from Professor Gordon. It was a long and scholarly letter, but the point was that the guinea-pig was the *Cavia aparoea* while the common pig was the genus *Sus* of the family *Suidae*. He remarked that "they were prolific and multiplied rapidly."

"They are not pigs," said the president, decidedly, to Morgan. "The twenty-five cent rate applies."

Morgan made the proper notation on the papers that had accumulated in File A6754, and turned them over to the Audit Department. The Audit Department took some time to look the matter up, and after the usual delay wrote Flannery that as he has had on hand one hundred and sixty guinea-pigs, the property of consignee, he should deliver them and collect charges at the rate of twenty-five cents each.

Flannery spent a day herding his charges through a narrow opening in their cage so that he might count them.

"Audit Dept." he wrote, when he had finished the count, "you are way off there may be was one hundred and sixty dago pigs once, but wake up don't be a back number. I've got even eight

hundred, now shall I collect for eight hundred or what, how about sixty-four dollars I paid out for cabbages."

It required a great many letters back and forth before the Audit Department was able to understand why the error had been made of billing one hundred and sixty instead of eight hundred, and still more time for it to get the meaning of the "cabbages."

Flannery was crowded into a few feet at the extreme front of the office. The pigs had all the rest of the room and two boys were employed constantly attending to them. The day after Flannery had counted the guinea-pigs there were eight more added to his drove, and by the time the Audit Department gave him authority to collect for eight hundred Flannery had given up all attempts to attend to the receipt or the delivery of goods. He was hastily building galleries around the express office, tier above tier. He had four thousand sixty-four guinea-pigs to care for! More were arriving daily.

Immediately following its authorization the Audit Department sent another letter, but Flannery was too busy to open it. They wrote another and then they telegraphed:

"Error in guinea-pig bill. Collect for two guinea-pigs, fifty cents. Deliver all to consignee."

Flannery read the telegram and cheered up. He wrote out a bill as rapidly as his pencil could travel over paper and ran all the way to the Morehouse home. At the gate he stopped suddenly. The house stared at him with vacant eyes. The windows were bare of curtains and he could see into the empty rooms. A sign on the porch said "To Let." Mr. Morehouse had moved! Flannery ran all the way back to the express office. Sixty-nine guinea-pigs had been born during his absence. He ran out again and made feverish inquiries in the village. Mr. Morehouse had not only moved, but he had left Westcote. Flannery returned to the express office and found that two hundred and six guinea-pigs had entered the world since he left it. He wrote a telegram to the Audit Department.

"Can't collect fifty cents for two dago pigs consignee has left town address unknown what shall I do? Flannery."

The telegram was handed to one of the clerks in the Audit Department, and as he read it he laughed.

"Flannery must be crazy. He ought to know that the thing to do is to return the consignment here," said the clerk. He telegraphed Flannery to send the pigs to the main office of the company at Franklin.

When Flannery received the telegram he set to work. The six boys he had engaged to help him also set to work. They worked with the haste of desperate men, making cages out of soap boxes, cracker boxes, and all kinds of boxes, and as fast as the cages were completed they filled them with guinea-pigs and expressed them to Franklin. Day after day the cages of guinea-pigs flowed in a steady stream from Westcote to Franklin, and still Flannery and his six helpers ripped and nailed and packed—relentlessly and feverishly. At the end of the week they had shipped two hundred and eighty cases of guinea-pigs, and there were in the express office seven hundred and four more pigs than when they began packing them.

"Stop sending pigs. Warehouse full," came a telegram to Flannery. He stopped packing only long enough to wire back, "Can't stop," and kept on sending them. On the next train up from Franklin came one of the company's inspectors. He had instructions to stop the stream of guinea-pigs at all hazards. As his train drew up to Westcote station he saw a cattle car standing on the express company's siding. When he reached the express office he saw the express wagon backed up to the door. Six boys were carrying bushel baskets of guinea-pigs from the office and dumping them into the wagon. Inside the room Flannery, with his coat and vest off, was shoveling guinea-pigs into bushel baskets with a coal scoop. He was winding up the guinea-pig episode.

He looked up at the inspector with a snort of anger.

"Wan wagonload more an' I'll be quit of thim, an' niver will ye catch Flannery wid no more foreign pigs on his hands. No, sur! They near was the death o' me. Nixt toime I'll know that pigs of whatever nationality is domestic pets—an' go at the lowest rate."

He began shoveling again rapidly speaking quickly between breaths.

"Rules may be rules, but you can't fool Mike Flannery twice wid the same thrick—whin ut comes to live stock, dang the rules.

So long as Flannery runs this expriss office—pigs is pets,—an' cows is pets,—an' horses is pets,—an' lions an' tigers an' Rocky Mountain goats is pets,—an' the rate on thim is twinty-foive cints."

He paused long enough to let one of the boys put an empty basket in the place of the one he had just filled. There were only a few guinea-pigs left. As he noted their limited number his natural habit of looking on the bright side returned.

"Well, annyhow," he said cheerfully, "'tis not so bad as ut might be. What if thim dago pigs had been elephants!"

PETROLEUM V. NASBY (DAVID ROSS LOCKE)

A Letter

I AM REQUESTED TO ACT AS CHAPLAIN OF THE CLEVELAND CONVENTION.—THAT BEAUTIFUL CITY VISITED FOR THAT PURPOSE.

POST OFFIS, CONFEDRIT X ROADS,
(wich is in the Stait uv Kentucky),
September 20, 1866.

I wuz sent for to come to Washington, from my comfortable quarters at the Post Offis, to attend the convenshun uv sich soldiers and sailors uv the United States ez bleeve in a Union uv 36 States, and who hev sworn allejinse to a flag with 36 stars onto it, at Cleveland. My esteemed and life-long friend and collaborer, Rev. Henry Ward Beecher, wuz to hev bin the chaplin uv the convenshun, but he failed us, and it wuz decided in a Cabinet meetin that I shood take his place. I didn't see the necessity uv hev'in a chaplin at every little convenshun uv our party, and so stated; but Seward remarked, with a groan, that ef ever there wuz a party, since parties wuz invented, wich needed prayin for, ours wuz that party. "And, Parson," sed he, glancin' at a list uv delegates, "ef yoo hev any agonizin petitions, any prayers uv extra fervency, offer em up for these fellers. Ef there is any efficacy in prayer, it's my honest, unbiased opinion that there never wuz in the history uv the world, nor never will be

From Swingin Round the Cirkle, by Petroleum V. Nasby.

agin, sich a magnificent chance to make it manifest. Try yoorself particularly on Custer; tho', after all," continyood he, in a musin, abstracted sort uv a way, wich he's fallen into lately, "the fellow is sich a triffin bein, that he reely kin hardly be held 'sponsible for what he's doing; and the balance uv em, good Hevens! they'r mostly druv to it by hunger." And the Secretary maundered on suthin about "sixty days" and "ninety days," payin no more attention to the rest uv us than ez ef we wuzn't there at all.

So, receevin transportashen and suffishent money from the secret service fund for expenses, I departed for Cleveland, and after a tejus trip thro' an Ablishn country, I arrived there. My thots were gloomy beyond expression. I hed recently gone through this same country ez chaplin to the Presidential tour, and every stashen hed its pecooliar onpleasant remembrances. Here wuz where the cheers for Grant were vociferous, with nary a snort for His Eggslency; there wuz where the p~~e~~lsantry laft in his face when he went thro' with the regler ritooal uv presentin the constitooshn and the flag with 36 stars onto it to a deestrick assessor; there wuz—but why recount my sufferins? Why harrow up the public bosom, or lasserate the public mind? Suffice to say, I endoored it; suffice to say that I hed strength left to ride up Bank Street, in Cleveland, the seen uv the most awful insult the Eggsecutive ever received.

The evenin I arrived, the delegates, sich ez wuz on hand, held a informal meetin to arrange matters so ez they wood work smooth when the crowd finally got together. Genral Wool wuz ez gay and frisky ez though he reely belonged to the last ginerashn. There wuz Custar, uv Michigan, with his hair freshly oiled and curled, and busslin about ez though he hed cheated hisself into the beleef that he reely amounted to suthin; and there wuz seventy-eight other men, who hed distinguished themselves in the late war, but who hed never got their deserts, ceptin by brevet, owin to the fact that the Administrashn wuz Ablishn, which they wuzn't. They were, in a pekuniary pint uv view, suthin the worse for wear, tho' why that shood hev bin the case I coodent see (they hevin bin, to an alarmin extent, quarter-masters and commissaries, and in the recrootin service), till I

notist the prevailin color uv their noses, and heerd one uv em ask his neighbor ef Cleveland wuz blest with a faro bank! Then I knowd all about it.

There wuz another pekooliarity about it which for a time amoozed me. Them ez wuz present wuz divided into 2 classes—those ez hed been recently appinted to posishens, and them ez expected to be shortly. I notist on the countenances uv the first class a look uv releef, sich ez I hev seen in factories Saturday nite, after the hands wuz paid off for a hard week's work; and on the other class the most wolfish, hungry, fierce expression I hev ever witnessed. Likewise, I notist that the latter set uv patriots talked more hefty uv the necessity uv sustainin the policy uv our firm and noble President, and damned the Ablishunists with more emphasis and fervency than the others.

One enthoosiastic individual, who hed bin quarter-master two years, and hed bin allowed to resign "jest after the battle, mother," wich, hevin his papers all destroyed, made settlin with the government a easy matter, wuz so feroshus that I felt called upon to check him. "Gently, my frend," sed I, "gently! I hev bin thro' this thing; I hev my commission. It broke out on me jest ez it hez on yoo; but yoo won't git yoor Assessorship a minit sooner for it."

"It ain't a Assessorship I want," sez he. "I hev devoted myself to the task uv bindin up the wounds uv my beloved country—"

"Did you stop anybody very much from inflictin them sed wounds?" murmured I.

"And ef I accept the Post Orfis in my native village,—which I hev bin solissited so strongly to take that I hev finally yielded,—I do it only that I may devote my few remainin energies wholly to the great cause uv restorin the 36 States to their normal posishens under the flag with 36 stars onto it, in spite uv the Joodis Iskariots wich, ef I am whom, wat is the Savior, and—and where is—"

Perseevin that the unfortunate man hed got into the middle uv a quotashen from the speech uv our noble and patriotic President, and knowin his intellek wuzn't hefty enough to git it off jist as it wuz originally delivered, I took him by the throat, and shet off the flood uv his elokence.

"Be quiet, yoo idiot!" remarked I, soothingly, to him. "Yoo'll

git your apintment, becoz, for the fust time in the history uv this or any other Republic, there's a market for jist sich men ez yoo; but all this blather won't fetch it a minit sooner."

"Good Lord!" tho't I, ez I turned away, "wat a President A. J. is, to hev to buy up *sich* cattel! Wat a postmaster he must be, whose ginerall cussedness turns *my* stummick!"

It wuz deemed necessary to see uv wat we wuz compozed; whatever Kernel K——, who is now Collector uv Revenue in Illinoy, asked ef there wuz ary man in the room who hed bin a prizner doorin the late fratricide struggle. A gentleman uv, perhaps, thirty aroze, and sed he wuz. He hed bin taken three times, and wuz, altogether, 18 months in dorrance vile in three diffrent prizns.

Custar fell on his neck, and asked him, aggitatidly, ef he wuz shoor—quite shoor, after sufferin all that, that he supported the policy of the President? Are you quite shoor—quite shoor?

"I am," returned the phenomenon. "I stand by Andrew Johnson and his policy, and I don't want no officel!"

"Hev yoo got wun?" shouted they all in korus.

"Nary!" sed he. "With me it is a matter uv principle!"

"Wat prizns wuz yoo incarcerated in?" asked I, lookin at him with wonder.

"Fust at Camp Morton, then at Camp Douglas, and finally at Johnson's Island!"

Custar dropt him, and the rest remarked that, while they hed a very helthy opinion uv him, they guessed he'd better not men-shen his presence, or consider hissself a delegate. Ez ginerous foes they loved him ruther better than a brother; yet, as the call didn't quite inclood him, tho' there wuz a delightful oneness between em, yet, ef 'twuz all the same, he hed better not announce hissself. He wuz from Kentucky, I afterwards ascertained.

The next mornin, suthin over two hundred more arriv; and the delegashens bein all in, it wuz decided to go on with the show. A big tent hed bin brought on from Boston to accommodate the expected crowd, and quite an animated discussion arose ez to wich corner uv it the Convenshun wuz to ockepy. This settled, the biznis wus begun. Genral Wool wuz made temporary Chairman, to which honor he responded in a elokent extemporaneous speech, which he read from manuscript. General Ewing

made another extemporaneous address, which he read from manuscript, and we adjourned for dinner.

The dinner hour was spent in caucussin privately in one uv the parlors uv the hotel. The chairman asked who shood make speeches after dinner, wen every man uv em pulled from his right side coat pocket a roll uv manuscript, and sed he hed jotted down a few ijees wich he hed conclooded to present extemporaneously to the Convenshun. That Babel over, the Chairman sed he presoomed some one shood be selected to prepare a address; whereupon every delegate rose, and pulled a roll uv manuscript from his left side coat pocket, and sed he had jotted down a few ijees on the situashn, wich he proposed to present, et settry. This occasioned another shindy; wen the Chairman remarked "Resolushens," wen every delegate rose, pulled a roll uv manuscript from his right breast coat pocket, and sed he hed jotted down a few ijees, wich, etc.

I stood it until some one mentioned me ez Chaplin to the expedition West, when the pressure becum unendurable. They sposed I was keeper uv the President's conscience, and I hed not a minit's peece after that. In vain I ashoored em that, there bein no consciences about the White House, no one could hold sich a offis; in vain I ashoored em that I hed no influence with His Majesty. Two-thirds uv em pulled applicashens for places they wanted from the left breast coat pocket, and insistid on my takin em, and seein that they was appointed. I told em that I cood do nuthin for em; but they laft me to skorn. "You are jist the style uv man," said they, "who hez infloocene with His Eggsleny, and yoo must do it." Hemmed in, there wuz but one way uv escape, and that way I took. Seezin a carpet sack, wich, by the way, belonged to a delegate (I took it to give myself the look of a traveler), I rushed to the depot, and startid home, entirely satisfied that ef Cleveland may be taken as a sample, the less His Majesty depends on soljers, the better.

PETROLEUM V. NASBY, P. M.

(wich is Postmaster),

and likewise late Chaplain to the expedishn.

P. S.—I opened the carpet sack on the train, spectin to find a clean shirt in it, at least. It contained, to my disgust, an address

to be read before the Cleveland Convention, a set uv resolutions, a speech, and a petition uv the proprietor thereof for a collectorship, signed by eight hundred names, and a copy uv the Indiana State Directory for 1864. The names wuz in one hand-writin, and wuz arranged alphabetically.

PETROLEUM V. NASBY.

The Rhyme of the Chivalrous Shark

Most chivalrous fish of the ocean,
To ladies forbearing and mild,
Though his record be dark, is the man-eating shark
Who will eat neither woman nor child.

He dines upon seamen and skippers,
And tourists his hunger assuage,
And a fresh cabin boy will inspire him with joy
If he's past the maturity age.

A doctor, a lawyer, a preacher,
He'll gobble one any fine day,
But the ladies, God bless 'em, he'll only address 'em
Politely and go on his way.

I can readily cite you an instance
Where a lovely young lady of Breem,
Who was tender and sweet and delicious to eat,
Fell into the bay with a scream.

She struggled and flounced in the water
And signaled in vain for her bark,
And she'd surely been drowned if she hadn't been found
By a chivalrous man-eating shark.

From *Nautical Lays of a Landsman*, by Wallace Irwin; copyright 1904 by the author. Reprinted by permission of Dodd, Mead and Company, Inc.

He bowed in a manner most polished,
Thus soothing her impulses wild;
"Don't be frightened," he said, "I've been properly bred
And will eat neither woman nor child."

Then he proffered his fin and she took it—
Such a gallantry none can dispute—
While the passengers cheered as the vessel they neared
And a broadside was fired in salute.

And they soon stood alongside the vessel,
When a life-saving dingey was lowered
With the pick of the crew, and her relatives, too,
And the mate and the skipper aboard.

So they took her aboard in a jiffy,
And the shark stood attention the while,
Then he raised on his flipper and ate up the skipper
And went on his way with a smile.

And this shows that the prince of the ocean,
To ladies forbearing and mild,
Though his record be dark, is the man-eating shark
Who will eat neither woman nor child.

The Duluth Speech

THE House having under consideration the joint resolution (S.R. No. 11), extending the time to construct a railroad from the St. Croix river or lake to the west end of Lake Superior and to Bayfield—

Mr. Knott said:—

MR. SPEAKER: If I could be actuated by any conceivable inducement to betray the sacred trust reposed in me by those to whose generous confidence I am indebted for the honor of a seat on this floor; if I could be influenced by any possible consideration to become instrumental in giving away, in violation of their known wishes, any portion of their interest in the public domain for the mere promotion of any railroad enterprise whatever, I should certainly feel a strong inclination to give this measure my most earnest and hearty support; for I am assured that its success would materially enhance the pecuniary prosperity of some of the most valued friends I have on earth,—friends for whose accommodation, I would be willing to make almost any sacrifice not involving my personal honor or my fidelity as the trustee of an express trust. And that fact of itself would be sufficient to countervail almost any objection I might entertain to the passage of this bill not inspired by an imperative and inexorable sense of public duty.

But, independent of the seductive influences of private friend-

From *Oddities of Southern Life and Character*, edited by Henry Watterson; reprinted by permission of Houghton Mifflin Company.

ship, to which I admit I am, perhaps, as susceptible as any of the gentlemen I see around me, the intrinsic merits of the measure itself are of such an extraordinary character as to commend it most strongly to the favorable consideration of every member of this House, myself not excepted, notwithstanding my constituents, in whose behalf alone I am acting here, would not be benefited by its passage one particle more than they would be by a project to cultivate an orange grove on the bleakest summit of Greenland's icy mountains. (Laughter.)

Now, sir, as to those great trunk lines of railway, spanning the continent from ocean to ocean, I confess my mind has never been fully made up. It is true they may afford some trifling advantages to local traffic, and they may even in time become the channels of a more extended commerce. Yet I have never been thoroughly satisfied either of the necessity or expediency of projects promising such meagre results to the great body of our people. But with regard to the transcendent merits of the gigantic enterprise contemplated in this bill I never entertained the shadow of a doubt. (Laughter.)

Years ago, when I first heard that there was somewhere in the vast *terra incognita*, somewhere in the bleak regions of the great Northwest, a stream of water known to the nomadic inhabitants of the neighborhood as the river St. Croix, I became satisfied that the construction of a railroad from that raging torrent to some point in the civilized world was essential to the happiness and prosperity of the American people, if not absolutely indispensable to the perpetuity of republican institutions on this continent. (Great laughter.) I felt instinctively that the boundless resources of that prolific region of sand and pine shrubbery would never be fully developed without a railroad constructed and equipped at the expense of the Government, and perhaps not then. (Laughter.) I had an abiding presentiment that, some day or other, the people of this whole country, irrespective of party affiliations, regardless of sectional prejudices, and "without distinction of race, color, or previous condition of servitude," would rise in their majesty, and demand an outlet for the enormous agricultural productions of those vast and fertile pine barrens, drained in the rainy season by the surging waters of the turbid St. Croix. (Great laughter.)

These impressions, derived simply and solely from the "eternal fitness of things," were not only strengthened by the interesting and eloquent debate on this bill, to which I listened with so much pleasure the other day, but intensified, if possible, as I read over this morning the lively colloquy which took place on that occasion, as I find it reported in last Friday's "Globe." I will ask the indulgence of the House while I read a few short passages, which are sufficient, in my judgment, to place the merits of the great enterprise contemplated in the measure now under discussion beyond all possible controversy.

The honorable gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. Wilson), who, I believe, is managing this bill, in speaking of the character of the country through which this railroad is to pass, says this:—

"We want to have the timber brought to us as cheaply as possible. Now, if you tie up the lands in this way, so that no title can be obtained to them,—for no settler will go on these lands, for he can not make a living,—you deprive us of the benefit of that timber."

Now, sir, I would not have it by any means inferred from this that the gentleman from Minnesota would insinuate that the people out in his section desire this timber merely for the purpose of fencing up their farms, so that their stock may not wander off and die of starvation among the bleak hills of the St. Croix. (Laughter.) I read it for no such purpose, sir, and make no such comment on it myself. In corroboration of this statement of the gentleman from Minnesota, I find this testimony given by the honorable gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. Washburn). Speaking of these same lands, he says:

"Under the bill, as amended by my friend from Minnesota, nine tenths of the land is open to actual settlers at \$2.50 per acre; the remaining one tenth is pine-timbered land, that is not fit for settlement, and never will be settled upon; but the timber will be cut off. I admit that it is the most valuable portion of the grant, for most of the grant is not valuable. It is quite valueless; and if you put in this amendment of the gentleman from Indiana, you may as well just kill the bill, for no man and no company will take the grant and build the road."

I simply pause here to ask some gentleman better versed in the science of mathematics than I am to tell me, if the timbered lands

are in fact the most valuable portion of that section of country, and they would be entirely valueless without the timber that is on them, what the remainder of the land is worth which has no timber on it at all. (Laughter.)

But further on I find a most entertaining and instructive interchange of views between the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. Rogers), the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. Washburn), and the gentleman from Maine (Mr. Peters) upon the subject of pine lands generally, which I will tax the patience of the House to read:—

“Mr. Rogers. Will the gentleman allow me to ask him a question?

“Mr. Washburn, of Wisconsin. Certainly.

“Mr. Rogers. Are these pine lands entirely worthless except for timber?

“Mr. Washburn, of Wisconsin. They are generally worthless for any other purpose. I am perfectly familiar with that subject. These lands are not valuable for purposes of settlement.

“Mr. Farnsworth. They will be after the timber is taken off?

“Mr. Washburn, of Wisconsin. No, sir.

“Mr. Rogers. I want to know the character of these pine lands.

“Mr. Washburn, of Wisconsin. They are generally sandy, barren lands. My friend from the Green Bay district (Mr. Sawyer) is himself perfectly familiar with this question, and he will bear me out in what I say, that these pine-timber lands are not adapted to settlement.

“Mr. Rogers. The pine lands to which I am accustomed are generally very good. What I want to know is, what is the difference between our pine lands and your pine lands?

“Mr. Washburn, of Wisconsin. The pine timber of Wisconsin generally grows upon barren, sandy land. The gentleman from Maine (Mr. Peters), who is familiar with pine lands, will, I have no doubt, say that pine timber grows generally upon the most barren lands.

“Mr. Peters. As a general thing pine lands are not worth much for cultivation.”

And further on I find this pregnant question, the joint production of the two gentlemen from Wisconsin:—

"Mr. Paine. Does my friend from Indiana suppose that in any event settlers will occupy and cultivate these pine lands?

"Mr. Washburn, of Wisconsin. Particularly without a railroad?

Yes, sir, "particularly without a railroad." It will be asked after a while, I am afraid, if settlers will go anywhere unless the Government builds a railroad for them to go on. (Laughter.)

I desire to call attention to only one more statement, which I think sufficient to settle the question. It is one made by the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. Paine), who says:—

"These lands will be abandoned for the present. It may be that at some remote period there will spring up in that region a new kind of agriculture, which will cause a demand for these particular lands; and they may then come into use and be valuable for agricultural purposes. But I know, and I can not help thinking that my friend from Indiana understands, that for the present, and for many years to come, these pine lands can have no possible value other than that arising from the pine timber which stands on them."

Now, sir, who, after listening to this emphatic and unequivocal testimony of these intelligent, competent and able-bodied witnesses (laughter), who that is not as incredulous as St. Thomas himself, will doubt for a moment that the Goshen of America is to be found in the sandy valleys and upon the pine-clad hills of St. Croix? (Laughter.) Who will have the hardihood to rise in his seat on this floor and assert that, excepting the pine bushes, the entire region would not produce vegetation enough in ten years to fatten a grasshopper? (Great laughter.) Where is the patriot who is willing that his country shall incur the peril of remaining another day without the amplest railroad connection with such an inexhaustible mine of agricultural wealth? (Laughter.) Who will answer for the consequences of abandoning a great and warlike people, in possession of a country like that, to brood over the indifference and neglect of their Government? (Laughter.) How long would it be before they would take to studying the Declaration of Independence, and hatching out the damnable heresy of secession? How long before the grim demon of civil discord would rear again his horrid head in our midst, "gnash loud his iron fangs, and shake his crest of bristling bayonets"? (Laughter.)

Then, sir, think of the long and painful process of reconstruction that must follow, with its concomitant amendments to the Constitution; the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth articles. The sixteenth, it is of course understood, is to be appropriated to those blushing damsels who are, day after day, beseeching us to let them vote, hold office, drink cock-tails, ride astraddle, and do everything else the men do. (Roars of laughter.) But above all, sir, let me implore you to reflect for a single moment on the deplorable condition of our country in case of a foreign war, with all our ports blockaded, all our cities in a stage of siege; the gaunt spectre of famine brooding like a hungry vulture over our starving land; our commissary stores all exhausted, and our famishing armies withering away in the field, a helpless prey to the insatiate demon of hunger; our navy rotting in the docks for want of provisions for our gallant seamen, and we without any railroad communication whatever with the prolific pine thickets of the St. Croix. (Great laughter.)

Ah, sir, I could very well understand why my amiable friends from Pennsylvania (Mr. Myers, Mr. Kelley and Mr. O'Neill) should be so earnest in their support of this bill the other day, and if their honorable colleague, my friend, Mr. Randall, will pardon the remark, I will say I considered his criticism of their action on that occasion as not only unjust, but ungenerous. I know they were looking forward with the far-reaching ken of enlightened statesmanship to the pitiable condition in which Philadelphia will be left, unless speedily supplied with railroad connection in some way or other with this garden spot of the universe. (Laughter.) And besides, sir, this discussion has relieved my mind of a mystery that has weighed upon it like an incubus for years. I could never understand before why there was so much excitement during the last Congress over the acquisition of Alta Vela. I could never understand why it was that some of our ablest statesmen and most disinterested patriots should entertain such dark forebodings of the untold calamities that were to befall our beloved country unless we should take immediate possession of that desirable island. But I see now that they were laboring under the mistaken impression that the Government would need the guano to manure the public lands on the St. Croix. (Great laughter.)

Now, sir, I repeat I have been satisfied for years that if there was any portion of the inhabited globe absolutely in a suffering condition for want of a railroad it was these teeming pine barrens of the St. Croix. (Laughter.) At what particular point on that noble stream such a road should be commenced I knew was immaterial, and so it seems to have been considered by the draughtsman of this bill. It might be up at the spring or down at the foot-log, or the watergate, or the fish-dam, or anywhere along the bank, no matter where. (Laughter.) But in what direction should it run, or where should it terminate, were always to my mind questions of the most painful perplexity. I could conceive of no place on "God's green earth" in such straitened circumstances for railroad facilities as to be likely to desire or willing to accept such a connection. (Laughter.) I knew that neither Bayfield nor Superior City would have it, for they both indignantly spurned the munificence of the Government when coupled with such ignominious conditions, and let this very same land grant die on their hands years and years ago, rather than submit to the degradation of a direct communication by railroad with the piny woods of the St. Croix; and I knew that what the enterprising inhabitants of those giant young cities would refuse to take would have few charms for others, whatever their necessities or cupidity might be. (Laughter.)

Hence, as I have said, sir, I was utterly at a loss to determine where the terminus of this great and indispensable road should be, until I accidentally overheard some gentleman the other day mention the name of "Duluth." (Great laughter.) Duluth! The word fell upon my ear with peculiar and indescribable charm, like the gentle murmur of a low fountain stealing forth in the midst of roses, or the soft, sweet accents of an angel's whisper in the bright, joyous dream of sleeping innocence. Duluth! 'Twas the name for which my soul had panted for years, as the hart panteth for the water-brooks. (Renewed laughter.) But where was Duluth? Never, in all my limited reading, had my vision been gladdened by seeing the celestial word in print. (Laughter.) And I felt a profounder humiliation in my ignorance that its dulcet syllables had never before ravished my delighted ear. (Roars of laughter.) I was certain the draughtsman of this bill had never heard of it, or it would have been designated as one of the termini

of this road. I asked my friends about it, but they knew nothing of it. I rushed to the library, and examined all the maps I could find. (Laughter.) I discovered in one of them a delicate, hair-like line, diverging from the Mississippi near a place marked Prescott, which I supposed was intended to represent the river St. Croix, but I could nowhere find Duluth.

Nevertheless, I was confident it existed somewhere, and that its discovery would constitute the crowning glory of the present century, if not of all modern times. (Laughter.) I knew it was bound to exist in the very nature of things; that the symmetry and perfection of our planetary system would be incomplete without it (renewed laughter); that the elements of material nature would long since have resolved themselves back into original chaos, if there had been such a hiatus in creation as would have resulted from leaving out Duluth. (Roars of laughter.) In fact, sir, I was overwhelmed with the conviction that Duluth not only existed somewhere, but that, wherever it was, it was a great and glorious place. I was convinced that the greatest calamity that ever befell the behighted nations of the ancient world was in their having passed away without a knowledge of the actual existence of Duluth; that their fabled Atlantis, never seen save by the hallowed vision of inspired poesy, was, in fact, but another name for Duluth; that the golden orchard of the Hesperides was but a poetical synonym for the beer gardens in the vicinity of Duluth. (Great laughter.) I was certain that Herodotus had died a miserable death because in all his travels and with all his geographical research he had never heard of Duluth. (Laughter.) I knew that if the immortal spirit of Homer could look down from another heaven than that created by his own celestial genius upon the long lines of pilgrims from every nation of the earth to the gushing fountain of poesy opened by the touch of his magic wand; if he could be permitted to behold the vast assemblage of grand and glorious productions of the lyric art called into being by his own inspired strains, he would weep tears of bitter anguish that, instead of lavishing all the stores of his mighty genius upon the fall of Ilion, it had not been his more blessed lot to crystallize in deathless song the rising glories of Duluth. (Great and continued laughter.) Yet, sir, had it not been for this map, kindly furnished me by the Legislature of

Minnesota, I might have gone down to my obscure and humble grave in an agony of despair, because I could nowhere find Duluth. (Renewed laughter.) Had such been my melancholy fate, I have no doubt that, with the last feeble pulsation of my breaking heart, with the last faint exhalation of my fleeting breath, I should have whispered, "Where is Duluth?" (Roars of laughter.)

But, thanks to the beneficence of that band of ministering angels who have their bright abodes in the far-off capital of Minnesota, just as the agony of my anxiety was about to culminate in the frenzy of despair, this blessed map was placed in my hands; and as I unfolded it a resplendent scene of ineffable glory opened before me, such as I imagine burst upon the enraptured vision of the wandering *peri* through the opening gates of paradise. (Renewed laughter.) There, there for the first time, my enchanted eye rested upon the ravishing word "Duluth."

This map, sir, is intended, as it appears from its title, to illustrate the position of Duluth in the United States; but if gentlemen will examine it, I think they will concur with me in the opinion that it is far too modest in its pretensions. It not only illustrates the position of Duluth in the United States, but exhibits its relations with all created things. It even goes farther than this. It lifts the shadowy veil of futurity, and affords us a view of the golden prospects of Duluth far along the dim vista of ages yet to come.

If gentlemen will examine it, they will find Duluth not only in the centre of the map, but represented in the centre of a series of concentric circles, one hundred miles apart, and some of them as much as four thousand miles in diameter, embracing alike in their tremendous sweep the fragrant savannas of the sun-lit South and the eternal solitudes of snow that mantle the ice-bound North. (Laughter.) How these circles were produced is perhaps one of those primordial mysteries that the most skillful paleologist will never be able to explain. (Renewed laughter.) But the fact is, sir, Duluth is preëminently a central place, for I am told by gentlemen who have been so reckless of their own personal safety as to venture away into those awful regions where Duluth is supposed to be that it is so exactly in the centre of

the visible universe that the sky comes down at precisely the same distance all around it. (Roars of laughter.)

I find by reference to this map that Duluth is situated somewhere near the western end of Lake Superior; but as there is no dot or other mark indicating its exact location, I am unable to say whether it is actually confined to any particular spot, or whether "it is just lying around there loose." (Renewed laughter.) I really can not tell whether it is one of those ethereal creations of intellectual frostwork, more intangible than the rose-tinted clouds of a summer sunset,—one of those airy exhalations of the speculator's brain, which I am told are ever flitting in the forms of towns and cities along those lines of railroad, built with Government subsidies, luring the unwary settlers as the mirage of the desert lures the famishing traveler on, and ever on, until it fades away in the darkening horizon,—or whether it is a real *bona fide*, substantial city, all "staked off," with the lots marked with their owners' names, like that proud commercial metropolis recently discovered on the desirable shores of San Domingo. (Laughter.) But, however that may be, I am satisfied Duluth is there, or thereabout, for I see it stated here on this map that it is exactly thirty-nine hundred and ninety miles from Liverpool (laughter), though I have no doubt, for the sake of convenience, it will be moved back ten miles, so as to make the distance an even four thousand. (Renewed laughter.)

Then, sir, there is the climate of Duluth, unquestionably the most salubrious and delightful to be found anywhere on the Lord's earth. Now, I have always been under the impression, as I presume other gentlemen have, that in the region around Lake Superior it was cold enough for at least nine months in the year to freeze the smokestack off a locomotive. (Great laughter.) But I see it represented on this map that Duluth is situated exactly half-way between the latitudes of Paris and Venice, so that gentlemen who have inhaled the exhilarating airs of the one or basked in the golden sunlight of the other may see at a glance that Duluth must be a place of untold delights (laughter), a terrestrial paradise, fanned by the balmy zephyrs of an eternal spring, clothed in the gorgeous sheen of ever-blooming flowers, and vocal with the silvery melody of nature's choicest songsters.

(Laughter.) In fact, sir, since I have seen this map I have no doubt that Byron was vainly endeavoring to convey some faint conception of the delicious charms of Duluth when his poetic soul gushed forth in the rippling strains of that beautiful rhapsody:

“Know ye the land of the cedar and vine,
Where the flowers ever blossom, the beams ever shine;
Where the light wings of Zephyr, oppressed with perfume,
Wax faint o’er the gardens of Gul in her bloom;
Where the citron and olive are fairest of fruit,
And the voice of the nightingale never is mute;
Where the tints of the earth and the hues of the sky,
In color though varied, in beauty may vie?”

(Laughter.)

As to the commercial resources of Duluth, sir, they are simply illimitable and inexhaustible, as is shown by this map. I see it stated here that there is a vast scope of territory, embracing an area of over two million square miles, rich in every element of material wealth and commercial prosperity, all tributary to Duluth. Look at it, sir (pointing to the map). Here are inexhaustible mines of gold, immeasurable veins of silver, impenetrable depths of boundless forest, vast coal-measures, wide, extended plains of richest pasturage, all, all embraced in this vast territory, which must, in the very nature of things, empty the untold treasures of its commerce into the lap of Duluth. (Laughter.)

Look at it, sir! (Pointing to the map.) Do not you see from these broad, brown lines drawn around this immense territory that the enterprising inhabitants of Duluth intend some day to inclose it all in one vast corral, so that its commerce will be bound to go there, whether it would or not? (Great laughter.) And here, sir (still pointing to the map), I find within a convenient distance the Piegan Indians, which, of all the many accessories to the glory of Duluth, I consider by far the most inestimable. For, sir, I have been told that when the small-pox breaks out among the women and children of that famous tribe, as it sometimes does, they afford the finest subjects in the world for the strategical experiments of any enterprising military hero

who desires to improve himself in the noble art of war (laughter); especially for any valiant lieutenant general, whose

“Trenchant blade, Toledo trusty,
For want of fighting has grown rusty,
And eats into itself for lack
Of somebody to hew and hack.”

(Great laughter.)

Sir, the great conflict now raging in the Old World has presented a phenomenon in military science unprecedented in the annals of mankind—a phenomenon that has reversed all the traditions of the past as it had disappointed all the expectations of the present. A great and warlike people, renowned alike for their skill and valor, have been swept away before the triumphant advance of an inferior foe, like autumn stubble before a hurricane of fire. For aught I know, the next flash of electric fire that shimmers along the ocean cable may tell us that Paris, with every fibre quivering with the agony of impotent despair, writhes beneath the conquering heel of her loathed invader. Ere another moon shall wax and wane the brightest star in the galaxy of nations may fall from the zenith of her glory never to rise again. Ere the modest violets of early spring shall open their beautiful eyes, the genius of civilization may chant the wailing requiem of the proudest nationality the world has ever seen, as she scatters her withered and tear-moistened lilies o’er the bloody tomb of butchered France. But, sir, I wish to ask if you honestly and candidly believe that the Dutch would have ever overrun the French in that kind of style if General Sheridan had not gone over there and told King William and Von Moltke how he had managed to whip the Piegan Indians. (Great laughter.)

And here, sir, recurring to this map, I find in the immediate vicinity of the Piegans “vast herds of buffalo” and “immense fields of rich wheat lands.”

(Here the hammer fell.)

(Many cries: “Go on!” “Go on!”)

The Speaker. Is there objection to the gentleman from Kentucky continuing his remarks? The Chair hears none. The gentleman will proceed.

Mr. Knott. I was remarking, sir, upon these vast "wheat fields" represented on this map as in the immediate neighborhood of the buffaloes and the Piegans, and was about to say that the idea of there being these immense wheat fields in the very heart of a wilderness, hundreds and hundreds of miles beyond the utmost verge of civilization, may appear to some gentlemen as rather incongruous, as rather too great a strain on the "blankets" of veracity. But to my mind there is no difficulty in the matter whatever. The phenomenon is very easily accounted for. It is evident, sir, that the Piegans sowed that wheat there and plowed it with buffalo bulls. (Great laughter.) Now, sir, this fortunate combination of buffaloes and Piegans, considering their relative positions to each other and to Duluth, as they are arranged on this map, satisfies me that Duluth is destined to be the beef market of the world.

Here, you will observe (pointing to the map), are the buffaloes, directly between the Piegans and Duluth; and here, right on the road to Duluth, are the Creeks. Now, sir, when the buffaloes are sufficiently fat from grazing on these immense wheat fields, you see it will be the easiest thing in the world for the Piegans to drive them on down, stay all night with their friends, the Creeks, and go into Duluth in the morning. (Great laughter.) I think I see them now, sir, a vast herd of buffaloes, with their heads down, their eyes glaring, their nostrils dilated, their tongues out, and their tails curled over their back, tearing along toward Duluth, with about a thousand Piegans on their grass-bellied ponies yelling at their heels! (Great laughter.) On they come! And as they sweep past the Creeks, they join in the chase, and away they all go, yelling, bellowing, ripping, and tearing along, amid clouds of dust, until the last buffalo is safely penned in the stockyards of Duluth! (Shouts of laughter.)

Sir, I might stand here for hours and hours, and expatiate with rapture upon the gorgeous prospects of Duluth, as depicted upon this map. But human life is too short and the time of this House far too valuable to allow me to linger longer upon the delightful theme. (Laughter.) I think every gentleman on this floor is as well satisfied as I am that Duluth is destined to become the commercial metropolis of the universe, and that this road should be built at once. I am fully persuaded that no patriotic repre-

sentative of the American people, who has a proper appreciation of the associated glories of Duluth and the St. Croix, will hesitate a moment to say that every able-bodied female in the land, between the ages of eighteen and forty-five, who is in favor of "women's rights" should be drafted and set to work upon this great work without delay. (Roars of laughter.) Nevertheless, sir, it grieves my very soul to be compelled to say that I can not vote for the grant of lands provided for in this bill.

Ah, sir, you can have no conception of the poignancy of my anguish that I am deprived of that blessed privilege! (Laughter.) There are two insuperable obstacles in the way. In the first place, my constituents, for whom I am acting here, have no more interest in this road than they have in the great question of culinary taste now perhaps agitating the public mind of Dominica, as to whether the illustrious commissioners who recently left this capital for that free and enlightened republic would be better fricasseed, boiled, or roasted (great laughter); and, in the second place, these lands which I am asked to give away, alas, are not mine to bestow! My relation to them is simply that of trustee to an express trust. And shall I ever betray that trust? Never, sir! Rather perish Duluth! (Shouts of laughter.) Perish the paragon of cities! Rather let the freezing cyclones of the bleak Northwest bury it forever beneath the eddying sands of the raging St. Croix! (Great laughter.)

Chad's Story of the Goose

I NODDED my head, and Chad closed the door softly, taking with him a small cup and saucer, and returning in a few minutes followed by that most delicious of all aromas, the savory steam of boiling coffee.

"My Marsa John," he continued, filling the cup with the smoking beverage, "never drank nuffin' but tea, eben at de big dinners when all de gemmen had coffee in de little cups—dat's one ob 'em you's drinkin' out ob now; dey ain't mo' dan fo' on 'em left. Old marsa would have his pot ob tea: Henny use' ter make it for him; makes it now for Miss Nancy.

"Henny was a young gal den, long 'fo' we was married. Henny b'longed to Colonel Lloyd Barbour, on de next plantation to ourn.

"Mo' coffee, Major?" I handed Chad the empty cup. He refilled it, and went straight on without drawing breath.

"Wust scrape I eber got into wid old Marsa John was ober Henny. I tell ye she was a harricane in dem days. She come into de kitchen one time where I was helpin' git de dinner ready, an' de cook had gone to de spring house, an' she says:

"'Chad, what ye cookin' dat smells so nice?'

"'Dat's a goose,' I says, 'cookin' for Marsa John's dinner. We got quality,' says I, pointin' to de dinin'-room do'.

From *Colonel Carter of Cartersville*, by F. Hopkinson Smith; reprinted by permission of Houghton Mifflin Company.

"'Quality!' she says. 'Spec' I know what de quality is. Dat's for you an' de cook.'

"Wid dat she grabs a caarvin' knife from de table, opens de do' ob de big oven, cuts off a leg ob de goose, an' dis'pears round de kitchen corner wid de leg in her mouf.

"'Fo' I knowed whar I was Marsa John come to de kitchen do' an' says, 'Gittin' late, Chad; bring in de dinner.' You see, Major, dey ain't no up an' down stairs in de big house, like it is year; kitchen an' dinin'-room all on de same flo'.

"Well, sah, I was scared to def, but I tuk dat goose an' laid him wid de cut side down on de bottom of de pan 'fo' de cook got back, put some dressin' an' stuffin' ober him, an' shet de stove do'. Den I tuk de sweet potatoes an' de hominy an' put 'em on de table, an' den I went back in de kitchen to git de baked ham. I put on de ham an' some mo' dishes, an' marsa says, lookin' up:

"'I t'ought dere was a roast goose, Chad.'

"'I ain't yerd nothin' 'bout no goose,' I says, 'I'll ask de cook.'

"Next minute I yerd old marsa a-hollerin':

"'Mammy Jane, ain't we got a goose?'

"'Lord-a-massy! yes, marsa. Chad, you wu'thless nigger, ain't you tuk dat goose out yit?'

"'Is we got a goose?' said I.

"'Is we got a goose? Didn't you help pick it?'

"I see whar my hair was short, an' I snatched up a hot dish from de hearth, opened de oven do', an' slide de goose in jes' as he was, an' lay him down befo' Marsa John.

"'Now see what de ladies'll have for dinner,' says old marsa, pickin' up his caarvin' knife.

"'What'll you take for dinner, miss?' says I. 'Baked ham?'

"'No,' she says, lookin' up to whar Marsa John sat; 'I think I'll take a leg ob dat goose—jes so.'

"Well, marsa, cut off de leg an' put a little stuffin' an' gravy on wid a spoon, an' says to me, 'Chad, see what dat gemman'll have.'

"'What'll you take for dinner, sah?' says I. 'Nice breast o' goose, or slice o' ham?'

"'No; I think I'll take a leg of dat goose,' he says.

"I didn't say nuffin', but I knowed Lery well he wa'n't a-gwine to git it.

"But, Major, you oughter seen ole marsa lookin' for der udder leg ob dat goose! He rolled him over on de dish, dis way an' dat way, an' den he jabbed dat ole bone-handled caarvin' fork in him an' hel' him up ober de dish an' looked under him an' on top ob him, an' den he says, kinder sad like:

"'Chad, whar is de udder leg ob dat goose?'

"'It didn't hab none,' says I.

"'You mean ter say, Chad, dat de geoses on my plantation on'y got one leg?'

"'Some ob 'em has an' some ob 'em ain't. You see, marsa, we got two kinds in de pond, an' we was a little boddered to-day, so Mammy Jane cooked dis one 'cause I cotched it fust.'

"'Well,' said he, lookin' like he look when he send for you in de little room, 'I'll settle wid ye after dinner.'

"'Well, dar I was shiverin' an' shakin' in my shoes, an' droppin' gravy an' spillin' de wine on de table-cloth, I was dat shuck up; an' when de dinner was ober he calls all de ladies an' gemmen, an' says, 'Now come down to de duck pond. I'm gwineter show dis nigger dat all de geoses on my plantation got mo' den one leg.'

"'I followed 'long, trapesin' after de whole kit an' b'ilin', an' when we got to de pond"—here Chad nearly went into a convulsion with suppressed laughter—"dar was de geoses sittin' on a log in de middle of dat ole green goose-pond wid one leg stuck down so, an' de udder tucked under de wing."

Chad was now on one leg, balancing himself by my chair, the tears running down his cheek.

"'Dar, marsa,' says I, 'don't ye see? Look at dat old gray goose! Dat's de berry match ob de one we had to-day.'

"'Den de ladies all hollered, an' de gemmen laughed so loud dey yerd 'em at de big house.

"'Stop, you black scoun-rell' Marsa John says, his face gittin' white an' he a-jerkin' his handkerchief from his pocket. 'Shool'

"'Major, I hope to have my brains kicked out by a lame grass-hopper if ebery one ob dem geoses did n't put down de udder leg!

"'Now, you lyin' nigger,' he says, raisin' his cane ober my head, 'I'll show you'—

"'Stop, Marsa John!' I hollered; ''t ain't fair, 't ain't fair.'

"'Why ain't it fair?' says he.

"'Cause,' says I, 'you didn't say "Shool" to de goose what was on de table.'"

Chad laughed until he choked.

"And did he thrash you?"

"Marsa John? No, sah. He laughed loud as anybody; an' den dat night he says to me as I was puttin' some wood on de fire:

"'Chad, where did dat leg go?' An' so I ups an' tells him all about Henny, an' how I was lyin' 'case I was 'fcared de gal would git hurt, an' how she was on'y a-foolin, thinkin' it was my goose; an' den de ole marsa look in de fire for a long time, an' den he says:

"'Dat's Colonel Barbour's Henny, ain't it, Chad?"

"'Yes, marsa,' says I.

"Well, de next mawnin' he had his black horse saddled, an' I held the stirrup for him to git on, an' he rode ober to de Barbour plantation, an' didn't come back till plumb black night. When he come up I held de lantern so I could see his face, for I wa'n't easy in my mine all day. But it was all bright an' shinin' same as a' angel's.

"'Chad,' he says, handin' me de reins, 'I bought yo' Henny dis arternoon from Colonel Barbour, an' she's comin' ober to-morrow, an' you can bofe git married next Sunday.'"

Seffy and Sally

THE place was the porch of the store, the time was about ten o'clock in the morning of a summer day, the people were the amiable loafers—and Old Baumgartner. The person he was discoursing about was his son Sephenijah. I am not sure that the name was not the ripe fruit of his father's fancy—with, perhaps, the Scriptural suggestion which is likely to be present in the affairs of a Pennsylvania-German—whether a communicant or not—even if he live in Maryland.

"Yas—always last; expecial at funerals and weddings. Except his own—he's sure to be on time at his own funeral. Right out in front! Hah? But sometimes he misses his wedding. Why, I knowed a feller—you all knowed him, begoshens!—that didn't git there tell another feller'd married her—'bout more'n a year afterward. Wasn't it more'n a year, boys? Yas—Bill Eisenkrout. Or, now, was it his brother—Baltzer Iron-Cabbage? Seems to me now like it was Baltz. Somesing wiss a B at the front end, anyhow."

Henry Wasserman diffidently intimated that there was a curious but satisfactory element of safety in being last—a "fastnacht" in their language, in fact. Those in front were the ones usually hurt in railroad accidents, Alexander Althoff remembered.

"Safe?" cried the speaker. "Of course! But for why—say, for why?" Old Baumgartner challenged defiantly.

From Seffy: A Little Comedy of Country Manners, by John Luther Long.

No one answered and he let several impressive minutes intervene.

"You don't know! Hang you, none of you knows! Well—because he ain't there when anysing occurs—always a little late!"

They agreed with him by a series of sage nods.

"But, fellers, the worst is about courting. It's no way to be always late. Everybody else gits there first, and it's nossing for the fastnacht but weeping and wailing and gnashing of the teeth. And mebbby the other fellers gits considerable happiness—and a good farm."

There was complaint in the old man's voice, and they knew that he meant his own son Seffy. To add to their embarrassment, this same son was now appearing over the Lustich Hill—an opportune moment for a pleasing digression. For you must be told early concerning Old Baumgartner's longing for certain lands, tenements and hereditaments—using his own phrase—which were not his own, but which adjoined his. It had passed into a proverb of the vicinage; indeed, though the property in question belonged to one Sarah Pressel, it was known colloquially as "Baumgartner's Yearn."

And the reason of it was this: Between his own farm and the public road (and the railroad station when it came) lay the fairest meadow-land farmer's eye had ever rested upon. (I am speaking again for the father of Seffy and with his hyperbole.) Save in one particular, it was like an enemy's beautiful territory lying between one's less beautiful own and the open sea—keeping one a poor inlander who is mad for the seas—whose crops must either pass across the land of his adversary and pay tithes to him, or go by long distances around him at the cost of greater tithes to the soulless owners of the turnpikes—who aggravatingly fix a gate each way to make their tithes more sure. So, I say, it was like having the territory of his enemy lying between him and the deep water—save, as I have also said, in one particular, to wit: that the owner—the Sarah Pressel I have mentioned—was not Old Baumgartner's enemy.

In fact, they were tremendous friends. And it was by this friendship—and one other thing which I mean to mention later—that Old Baumgartner hoped, before he died, to attain the wish

of his life, and see, not only the Elysian pasture-field, but the whole of the adjoining farm, with the line fences down, a part of his. The other thing I promised to mention as an aid to this ambition—was Seffy. And, since the said Sarah was of nearly the same age as Seffy, perhaps I need not explain further, except to say that the only obstruction the old man could see now to acquiring the title by marriage was—Seffy himself. He was, and always had been, afraid of girls—especially such aggressive, flirtatious, pretty and tempestuous girls as this Sarah.

These things, however, were hereditary with the girl. It was historical, in fact, that, during the life of Sarah's good-looking father, so importunate had been Old Baumgartner for the purchase of at least the meadow—he could not have ventured more at that time—and so obstinate had been the father of the present owner—he had red hair precisely as his daughter had—that they had come to blows about it, to the discomfiture of Old Baumgartner; and, afterward, they did not speak. Yet, when the loafers at the store laughed, Baumgartner swore that he would, nevertheless, have that pasture before he died.

But then, as if fate, too, were against him, the railroad was built, and its station was placed so that the Pressel farm lay directly between it and him, and of course the "life" went more and more in the direction of the station—left him more and more "out of it"—and made him poorer and poorer, and Pressel richer and richer. And, when the store laughed at *that*, Baumgartner swore that he would possess half of the farm before he died; and as Pressel and his wife died, and Seffy grew up, and as he noticed the fondness of the little red-headed girl for his little tow-headed boy, he added to his adjuration that he would be harrowing that whole farm before *he* died,—*without paying a cent for it!*

But both Seffy and Sally had grown to a marriageable age without anything happening. Seffy had become inordinately shy, while the coquettish Sally had accepted the attentions of Sam Pritz, the clerk at the store, as an antagonist more worthy of her, and in a fashion which sometimes made the father of Seffy swear and lose his temper—with Seffy. Though, of course, in the final disposition of the matter, he was sure that no girl so nice as Sally would marry such a person as Sam Pritz, with no

extremely visible means of support—a salary of four dollars a week, and an odious reputation for liquor. And it was for these things, all of which were known (for Baumgartner had not a single secret) that the company at the store detected the personal equation in Old Baumgartner's communications.

Seffy had almost arrived by this time, and Sally was in the store! With Sam! The situation was highly dramatic. But the old man consummately ignored this complication and directed attention to his son. For him, the molasses-tapper did not exist. The fact is he was overjoyed. Seffy, for once in his life, would be on time! He would do the rest.

"Now, boys, chust look at 'em! Dogged if they ain't bese like one another! How's the proferb? Birds of a feather flock wiss one another? I dunno. Anyhow, Sef flocks wiss Betz constant. And they understand one another good. Trotting like a sidewise dog of a hot summer's day!" And he showed the company, up and down the store-porch, just how a sidewise dog would be likely to trot on a hot summer day—and then laughed joyously.

If there had been an artist eye to see they would have been well worth its while—Seffy and the mare so affectionately disparaged. And after all, I am not sure that the speaker himself had not an artist's eye. For a spring pasture, or a fallow upland, or a drove of goodly cows deep in his clover, I know he had. (Perhaps you, too, have?) And this was his best mare and his only son.

The big bay, clad in broad-banded harness, soft with oil and glittering with brasses, was shambling indolently down the hill, resisting her own momentum by the diagonal motion the old man had likened to a dog's sidewise trot. The looped trace-chains were jingling a merry dithyramb, her head was nodding, her tail swaying, and Seffy, propped by his elbow on her broad back, one leg swung between the hames, the other keeping time on her ribs, was singing:

" 'I want to be an angel
And with the angels stand,
A crown upon my forehead
A harp within my hand—' "

His adoring father chuckled. "I wonder what for kind of anchel

he'd make, anyhow? And Betz—they'll have to go together. Say, I wonder if it is horse-anchels?"

No one knew; no one offered a suggestion.

"Well, it ought to be. Say—he ken perform circus wiss ol' Betz!"

They expressed their polite surprise at this for perhaps the hundredth time.

"Yas—they have a kind of circus-ring in the barnyard. He stands on one foot, then on another, and on his hands wiss his feet kicking, and then he says words—like hokey-pokey—and Betz she kicks up behind and throws him off in the dung and we all laugh—happy efer after—Betz most of all!"

After the applause he said:

"I guess I'd better wake 'em up! What you sink?"

They one and all thought he had. They knew he would do it, no matter what they thought. His method, as usual, was his own. He stepped to the adjoining field, and, selecting a clod with the steely polish of the plowshare upon it, threw it at the mare. It struck her on the flank. She gathered her feet under her in sudden alarm, then slowly relaxed, looked slyly for the old man, found him, and understanding, suddenly wheeled and ambled off home, leaving Seffy prone on the ground as her part of the joke.

The old man brought Seffy in triumph to the store-porch.

"Chust stopped you afore you got to be a anchell" he was saying. "We couldn't bear to sink about you being a anchel—an' wiss the anchels stand—a harp upon your forehead, a crown within your hand, I expect—when it's corn-planting time."

Seffy grinned cheerfully, brushed off the dust and contemplated his father's watch—held accusingly against him. Old Baumgartner went on gaily.

"About an inch and a half apast ten! Seffy, I'm glad you ain't breaking your reputation for being fastnachtich. Chust about a quarter of an inch too late for the prize wiss flour on its hair and arms and its frock pinned up to show its new petticoat! Uh! If I had such a nice petticoat—" he imitated the lady in question, to the tremendous delight of the gentle loafers.

Seffy stared a little and rubbed some dust out of his eyes. He was pleasant but dull.

"Yassir, Sef, if you'd a-got yere at a inch and a quarter apast!

Now Sam's got her. Down in the cellar allicking molasses together! Doggone if Sam don't git eferysing—except his due bills. He don't want to be no anchel tell he dies. He's got fun enough yere—but Seffy—you're like the flow of molasses in January—at courting."

This oblique suasion made no impression on Seffy. It is doubtful if he understood it at all. The loafers began to smile. One laughed. The old man checked him with a threat of personal harm.

"Hold on there, Jefferson Dafis Busby," he chid. "I don't allow no one to laugh at my Seffy—except chust me—account I'm his daddy. It's a fight-word the next time you do it."

Mr. Busby straightened his countenance.

"He don't seem to notice—nor keer—'bout gals—do he?"

No one spoke.

"No, durn him, he ain't no good. Say—what'll you give for him, hah? Yere he goes to the highest bidder—for richer, for poorer, for better, for worser, up and down, in and out, swing your partners—what's bid? He ken plow as crooked as a mule's hind leg, sleep hard as a 'possum in wintertime, eat like a snake, git left efery time—but he ken ketch fish. They wait on him. What's bid?"

No one would hazard a bid.

"Yit a minute," shouted the old fellow, pulling out his bull's-eye watch again. "What's bid? Going—going—all done—going—"

"A dollar!"

The bid came from behind him, and the voice was beautiful to hear. A gleam came into the old man's eyes as he heard it. He deliberately put the watch back in its pocket, put on his spectacles, and turned, as if she were a stranger.

"Gone!" he announced then. "Who's the purchaser? Come forwards and take away you' property. What's the name, please?" Then he pretended to recognize her. "Oach! Sally! Well, that's lucky! He goes in good hands. He's sound and kind, but needs the whip." He held out his hand for the dollar.

It was the girl of whom he had spoken accurately as a prize. Her sleeves were turned up as far as they would go, revealing some soft lace-trimmed whiteness, and there *was* flour on her arms. Some patches of it on her face gave a petal-like effect to her

otherwise aggressive color. The pretty dress was pinned far enough back to reveal the prettier petticoat—plus a pair of trimly-clad ankles.

Perhaps these were neither the garments nor the airs in which every farmer-maiden did her baking. But then, Sally was no ordinary farmer-maiden. She was all this, it is true, but she was, besides, grace and color and charm itself. And if she chose to bake in such attire—or, even, if she chose to pretend to do so, where was the churl to say her nay, even though the flour was part of a deliberate “make up”? Certainly he was not at the store that summer morning.

And Seffy was there. Her hair escaped redness by only a little. But that little was just the difference between ugliness and beauty. For, whether Sally were beautiful or not—about which we might contend a bit—her hair was, and perhaps that is the reason why it was nearly always uncovered—or, possibly, again, because it was so much uncovered was the reason it was beautiful. It seemed to catch some of the glory of the sun. Her face had a few freckles and her mouth was a trifle too large. But, in it were splendid teeth.

In short, by the magic of brilliant color and natural grace she narrowly escaped being extremely handsome—in the way of a sunburned peach, or a maiden's-blush apple. And even if you should think she were not handsome, you would admit that there was an indescribable rustic charm about her. She was like the aroma of the hay-fields, or the woods, or a field of daisies, or dandelions.

The girl, laughing, surrendered the money, and the old man, taking an arm of each, marched them peremptorily away.

“Come to the house and git his clothes. Eferysing goes in—stofepipe hat, butterfly necktie, diamond pin, tooth-brush, hair-oil, razor and soap.”

They had got far enough around the corner to be out of sight of the store, during this gaiety, and the old man now shoved Seffy and the girl out in front of him, linked their arms, and retreated to the rear.

“What Sephenijah P. Baumgartner, Senior, hath j'ined together, let nobody put athunder, begoshens!” he announced.

The proceeding appeared to be painful to Seffy, but not to

Sally. She frankly accepted the situation and promptly put into action its opportunities for coquetry. She begged him, first, with consummate aplomb, to aid her in adjusting her parcels more securely, insisting upon carrying them herself, and it would be impossible to describe adequately her allures. The electrical touches, half-caress, half-defiance; the confidential whisperings, so that the wily old man in the rear might not hear; the surges up against him; the recoveries—only to surge again—these would require a mechanical contrivance which reports not only speech but action—and even this might easily fail, so subtle was it all!

"Sef—Seffy, I thought it was his old watch he was auctioning off. I want it for—for—a nest-egg! aha-ha-ha! You must excuse me."

"You wouldn't 'a' bid at all if you'd knowed it was me, I reckon," said Seffy.

"Yes, I would," declared the coquette. "I'd rather have you than any nest-egg in the whole world—any two of 'em!"—and when he did not take his chance—"if they were made of gold!"

But then she spoiled it.

"It's worse fellows than you, Seffy." The touch of coquetry was but too apparent.

"And better," said Seffy, with a lump in his throat. "I know I ain't so good with girls—and I don't care!"

"Yes!" she assented wickedly. "There *are* better ones."

"Sam Pritz—"

Sally looked away, smiled, and was silent.

"Sulky Seffy!" she finally said.

"If he does stink of salt mackerel, and 'most always drunk!" Seffy went on bitterly. "He's nothing but a molasses-tapper!"

Sally began to drift farther away and to sing. Calling Pritz names was of no consequence—except that it kept Seffy from making love to her while he was doing it—which seemed foolish to Sally. The old man came up and brought them together again.

"Oach! go 'long and make lofe some more. I like to see it. I expect I am an old fool, but I like to see it—it's like ol' times—yas, and if you don't look out there, Seffy, I'll take a hand myself—yassir! go 'long!"

He drew them very close together, each looking the other way. Indeed he held them there for a moment, roughly.

Seffy stole a glance at Sally. He wanted to see how she was taking his father's odiously intimate suggestion. But it happened that Sally wanted to see how he was taking it. She laughed with the frankest of joy as their eyes met.

"Seffy—I *do*—like you," said the coquette. "And you ought to know it. You impl!"

Now this was immensely stimulating to the bashful Seffy.

"I like *you*," he said—"ever since we was babies."

"Sef—I don't believe you. Or you wouldn't waste your time so—about Sam Pritzl!"

"Er—Sally—where you going to to-night?" Seffy meant to prove himself.

And Sally answered, with a little fright at the sudden aggressiveness she had procured.

"Nowheres that *I* know of."

"Well—may I set up with you?"

The pea-green sunbonnet could not conceal the utter amazement and then the radiance which shot into Sally's face.

"Set—up—with—me!"

"Yes!" said Seffy, almost savagely. "That's what I said."

"Oh, I—I guess so! Yes! of course!" she answered variously, and rushed off home.

"You know I own you," she laughed back, as if she had not been sufficiently explicit. "I paid for you! Your pappy's got the money! I'll expect my property tonight."

"Yas!" shouted the happy old man, "and begoshens! it's a reg'lar bargain! Ain't it, Seffy? You her property—real estate, hereditaments and tenements." And even Seffy was drawn into the joyous laughing conceit of it! Had he not just done the bravest thing of his small life?

"Yes!" he cried after the fascinating Sally. "For sure and certain, to-night!"

"It's a bargain!" cried she.

"For better or worser, richer or poorer, up an' down, in an' out, chassez right and left! Aha-ha-ha! Aha-ha-ha! But, Seffy,"—and the happy father turned to the happy son and hugged him, "don't you efer forgit that she's a feather-head and got a bright red temper like her daddy! And they both work mighty bad together sometimes. When you get her at the right place onct—

well, nail her down—hand and feet—so's she can't git away. When she gits mad her little brain evaporates, and if she had a knife she'd go round stabbing her best friends—that's the only sing that safes her—yas, and us!—no knife. If she had a knife it would be funerals following her all the time."

* * *

They advanced together now, Seffy's father whistling some tune that was never heard before on earth, and, with his arm in that of his son, they watched Sally bounding away. Once more, as she leaped a fence, she looked laughingly back. The old man whistled wildly out of tune. Seffy waved a hand!

"Now you shouting, Seffy! Shout ag'in!"

"I didn't say a word!"

"Well—it ain't too late! Go on!"

Now Seffy understood and laughed with his father.

"Nice gal, Sef—Seffy!"

"Yes!" admitted Seffy with reserve.

"Healthy."

Seffy agreed to this, also.

"No doctor-bills!" his father amplified.

Seffy said nothing.

"Entire orphen."

"She's got a granny!"

"Yas," chuckled the old man at the way his son was drifting into the situation—thinking about granny!—"but Sally owns *the farm!*"

"Uhu!" said Seffy, whatever that might mean.

"And Sally's the boss!"

Silence.

"And granny won't object to any one Sally marries, anyhow—she dassent! She'd git licked!"

"Who said anything about marrying?"

Seffy was speciously savage now—as any successful wooer might be.

"Nobody but me, sank you!" said the old man with equally specious meekness. "Look how she ken jump a six-rail fence. Like a three-year filly! She's a nice gal, Seffy—and the farms

j'ine together—her pasture-field and our corn-field. And she's kissing her hand backwards! At me or you, Seffy?"

Seffy said he didn't know. And he did not return the kiss—though he yearned to.

"Well, I bet a dollar that the first initial of his last name is Sephanijah P. Baumgartner, *Junior*."

"Well!" said Seffy with a great flourish, "I'm going to set up with her to-night."

"Oach—git out, Sef!"—though he knew it.

"You'll see."

"No, I won't," said his father. "I wouldn't be so durn mean. Nossir!"

Seffy grinned at this subtle foolery, and his courage continued to grow.

"I'm going to wear my high hat!" he announced, with his nose quite in the air.

"No, Sef!" said the old man with a wonderful inflection, facing him about that he might look into his determined face. For it must be explained that the stovepipe hat, in that day and that country, was dedicated only to the most momentous social occasions and that, consequently, gentlemen wore it to go courting.

"Yes!" declared Seffy again.

"Bring forth the stovepipe,
The stovepipe, the stovepipe—"

chanted Seffy's frivolous father in the way of the Anvil Chorus.

"And my butterfly necktie with—"

"Wiss the di'mond on?" whispered his father.

They laughed in confidence of their secret. Seffy, the successful wooer, was thawing out again. The diamond was not a diamond at all—the Hebrew who sold it to Seffy had confessed as much. But he also swore that if it were kept in perfect polish no one but a diamond merchant could tell the difference. Therefore, there being no diamond merchant anywhere near, and the jewel being always immaculate, Seffy presented it as a diamond and had risen perceptibly in the opinion of the vicinage.

"And—and—and—Sef—Seffy, what you givin' to do?"

"Do?"

Seffy had been absorbed in what he was going to wear.

"Yas—yas—that's the most important." He encircled Seffy's waist and gently squeezed it. "Oh, of *course*! Hah? But what *yit*?"

I regret to say that Seffy did not understand.

"Seffy," he said impressively, "you haf' tol' me what you goin' to wear. It ain't much. The weather's yit pooty col' nights. But I ken stand it if you ken—God knows about Sally! Now, what you goin' to *do*—that's the conuntrum I ast you!"

Still it was not clear to Seffy.

"Why—what I'm a-going to do, hah? Why—whatever occurs."

"Gosh-a'mighty! And nefer say a word or do a sing to help the occurrences along? Goshens! What a setting-up! Why—say—Seffy, what you set up *for*?"

Seffy did not exactly know. He had never hoped to practise the thing—in that sublimely militant phase.

"What do *you* think?"

"Well, Sef—plow straight to her heart. I wisht I had your chance. I'd show you a other-guess kind a setting-up-yassir! Make your mouth warter and your head swim, begoshens! Why, that Sally's just like a young stubble-field; got to be worked constant, and plowed deep, and manured heafy, and mebbly drained wiss blind ditches, and crops changed constant, and kep' a-going thataway—constant—constant—so's the weeds can't git in her. Then you ken put her in wheat after a while and git your money back."

This drastic metaphor had its effect. Seffy began to understand. He said so.

"Now, look here, Seffy," his father went on more softly, "when you git to this—and this—and this,"—he went through his pantomime again, and it included a progressive caressing to the kissing point—"well, chust when you bose comfortable—hah?—mebby on one cheer, what I know—it's so long sence I done it myself—when you bose comfortable, ast her—chust ast her—aham!—what she'll take for the pasture-field! She owns you bose and she can't use bose you and the pasture. A bird in the hand is worth seferral in another feller's—not so?"

But Seffy only stopped and stared at his father. This, again, he did *not* understand.

"You know well enough I got no money to buy no pasture-field," said he.

"Gosh-a'mighty!" said the old man joyfully, making as if he would strike Seffy with his huge fist—a thing he often did. "And ain't got nossing to trade?"

"Nothing except the mare!" said the boy.

"Say—ain't you got no feelings, you idjiot?"

"Oh—" said Seffy. And then: "But what's feelings got to do with cow-pasture?"

"Oach! No wonder he wants to be an anchel, and wiss the anchels stand—holding sings in his hands and on his head! He's too good for this wile world. He'd linger shifering on the brink and fear to launch away all his durn life—if some one didn't push him in. So here goes!"

This was spoken to the skies, apparently, but now he turned to his son again.

"Look a-yere, you young dummer-ux,* feelings is the same to gals like Sally, as money is to you and me. You ken buy potatoes wiss 'em! Do you understand?"

Seffy said that he did, now.

"Well, then, I'fe tried to *buy* that pasture-field a sousand times—"

Seffy started.

"Yas, that's a little bit a lie—mebby a dozen times. And at last Sally's daddy said he'd lick me if I efer said pasture-field ag'in, and I said it ag'in and he licked me! He was a big man—and red-headed yit, like Sally. Now, look a-yere—you ken git that pasture-field wissout money and wissout price—except you' dam' feelings which ain't no other use. Sally won't lick *you*—if she is bigger—don't be a-skeered. You got tons of feelin's you ain't got no other use for—don't waste 'em—they're good green money, and we'll git efen wiss Sally's daddy for licking me yit—and somesing on the side! Huh?"

At last it was evident that Seffy fully understood, and his father broke into that discordant whistle once more.

"A gal that ken jump a six-rail fence—and wissout no running ast—don't let her git apast you!"

"Well, I'm going to set up with her to-night," said Seffy again,

* Dumb ox—a term of reproach.

with a huge ahem. And the tune his father whistled as he opened the door for him sounded something like "I want to be an angel."

"But not to buy no pasture-land!" warned Seffy.

"Oach, no, of course not!" agreed his wily old father. "That's just one of my durn jokes. But I expect I'll take the fence down to-morrow! Say, Sef, you chust marry the gal. I'll take keer the fencel!"

* * *

It took Seffy a long time to array himself as he had threatened. And when it was all done you wouldn't have known him—you wouldn't have cared to know him. For his fine yellow hair was changed to an ugly brown by the patent hair-oil with which he had dressed it—and you would not have liked its fragrance, I trust. Bergamot, I think it was. His fine young throat was garroted within a starched standing collar, his feet were pinched in creaking boots, his hands close-gauntleted in buckskin gloves, and he altogether incomparable, uncomfortable, and triumphant.

Down stairs his father paced the floor, watch in hand. From time to time he would call out the hour, like a watchman on a minaret. At last:

"Look a-yere, Seffy, it's about two inches apast seven—and by the time you git there—say, *nefer* gif another feller a chance to git there afore you or to leave after you!"

Seffy descended at that moment with his hat poised in his left hand.

His father dropped his watch and picked it up.

Both stood at gaze for a moment.

"Sunder, Sef! You as beautiful as the sun, moon and stars—and as stinky as seferal apothecary shops. Yerc, take the watch and git along—so's you haf some time wiss you—now git along! You late a'ready. Goshens! You wass behind time when you wass born! Yas, your mammy wass disapp'inted in you right at first. You wass seventy-six hours late! But now you reformed—sank God! I always knowed it wass a cure for it, but I didn't know it wass anysing as nice as Sally."

Seffy issued forth to his first conquest—lighted as far as the front gate by the fat lamp held in his father's hand.

"A—Sef—Seffy, shall I set up for you tell you git home?" he called into the dark.

"No!" shouted Seffy.

"Aha—aha—aha! That sounds *right*! Don't you forgit when you bose—well-comfortable—aha—aha! Mebby on one cheer aha—ha-ha. And we'll bose take the fence down to-morrow. Mebby all three!"

Darius Green and His Flying Machine

If ever there lived a Yankee lad,
Wise or otherwise, good or bad,
Who, seeing the birds fly, didn't jump
With flapping arms from stake or stump,
Or, spreading the tail
Of his coat for a sail,
Take a soaring leap from post or rail,
And wonder why
He couldn't fly,
And flap, and flutter, and wish, and try,—
If ever you knew a country dunce
Who didn't try that as often as once,
All I can say is, that's a sign
He never would do for a hero of mine.

An aspiring genius was D. Green:
The son of a farmer, age fourteen;
His body was long and lank and lean,—
Just right for flying, as will be seen;
He had two eyes as bright as a bean,
And a freckled nose that grew between,
A little awry,—for I must mention
That he had riveted his attention
Upon his wonderful invention,

From *The Works of J. T. Trowbridge*.

Twisting his tongue as he twisted the strings,
And working his face as he worked the wings,
And with every turn of gimlet and screw
Turning and screwing his mouth round, too,
Till his nose seemed bent

To catch the scent,
Around some corner, of new-baked pies,
And his wrinkled cheeks and his squinting eyes
Grew puckered into a queer grimace,
That made him look very droll in the face,
And also very wise.

And wise he must have been, to do more
Than ever a genius did before,
Excepting Dædalus, of yore,
And his son Icarus, who wore

Upon their backs
Those wings of wax
He had read of in the old almanacs.
Darius was clearly of the opinion
That the air is also man's dominion,
And that, with paddle or fin or pinion,

We soon or late shall navigate
The azurc, as now we sail the sea.
The thing looks simple enough to me;
And, if you doubt it,

Hear how Darius reasoned about it.

"The birds can fly, an' why can't I?
Must we give in," says he, with a grin,
"That the bluebird an' phoebe

Are smarter'n we be?

Jest fold our hands an' see the swaller
An' blackbird an' catbird beat us holler?
Does the little, chatterin', sassy wren,
No bigger'n my thumb, know more than men?

Jest show me that!

Ur prove't the bat
Hez got more brains than's in my hat,
An' I'll back down, an' not till then!"
He argued further, "Nur I can't see

What's the use o' wings to a bumble-bee,
Fur to git a livin' with, more'n to me;
Ain't my business
Important's his'n is?
That Icarus
Made a perty muss:
Him an' his daddy Dædalus
They might 'a' knowed wings made o' wax
Wouldn't stand sun-heat an' hard whacks.
I'll make mine o' luther,
Ur suthin' ur other."

And he said to himself, as he tinkered and planned,
"But I ain't goin' to show my hand
To nummies that never can understand
The fust idee that's big an' grand."
So he kept his secret from all the rest,
Safely buttoned within his vest;
And in the loft above the shed
Himself he locks, with thimble and thread
And wax and hammer and buckles and screws,
And all such things as geniuses use;
Two bats for patterns, curious fellows!
A charcoal-pot and a pair of bellows;
Some wire, and several old umbrellas;
A carriage-cover, for tail and wings;
A piece of harness; and straps and strings;
And a big strong box,
In which he locks
These and a hundred other things.
His grinning brothers, Reuben and Burke
And Nathan and Jotham and Solomon, lurk
Around the corner to see him work,—
Sitting cross-legged, like a Turk,
Drawing the wax-end through with a jerk,
And boring the holes with a comical quirk
Of his wise old head, and a knowing smirk.
But vainly they mounted each other's backs,
And poked through knot-holes and pried through cracks;

With wood from the pile and straw from the stacks
He plugged the knot-holes and calked the cracks;
And a bucket of water, which one would think
He had brought up into the loft to drink

When he chanced to be dry,

Stood always nigh,

For Darius was sly!

And whenever at work he happened to spy

At chink or crevice a blinking eye,

He let a dipper of water fly.

"Take that! an' ef ever ye git a peep,

Guess you'll ketch a weasel asleep!"

And he sings as he locks

His big strong box:—

SONG

"The weasel's head is small an' trim,

An' he is leetle an' long an' slim,

An' quick of motion an' nimble of limb,

An' ef yeou'll be

Advised by me,

Keep wide awake when ye're ketchin' him!"

So day after day

He stitched and tinkered and hammered away,

Till at last 'twas done,—

The greatest invention under the sun!

"An' now," says Darius, "hooray fer some fun!"

'T was the Fourth of July,

And the weather was dry,

And not a cloud was on all the sky,

Save a few light fleeces, which here and there,

Half mist, half air,

Like foam on the ocean went floating by:

Just as lovely a morning as ever was seen

For a nice little trip in a flying-machine.

Thought cunning Darius: "Now I shan't go

Along 'ith the fellers to see the show.

I'll say I've got sich a terrible cough!
An' then, when the folks 'ave all gone off,
I'll hev full swing
Fer to try the thing,
An' practyse a leetle on the wing."

"Ain't goin' to see the celebration?"
Says Brother Nate: "No; botheration!
I've got sich a cold—a toothache—I—
My gracious!—feel's though I should fly!"

Said Jotham, "'Shol
Guess ye better go."
But Darius said, "Nol
Shouldn't wonder 'f yeou might see me, though,
'Long 'bout noon, ef I git red
O' this jumpin', thumpin' pain 'n my head."
For all the while to himself he said:—

"I tell ye what!
I'll fly a few times around the lot,
To see how 't seems, then soon's I've got
The hang o' the thing, ez likely's not,
I'll astonish the nation,
An' all creation,
By flyin' over the celebration!
I'll balance myself on my wings like a sea-gull;
I'll dance on the chimbleys; I'll stan' on the steeple;
I'll flop up to winders an' scare the people!
I'll light on the libbe'ty-pole, an' crow;
An' I'll say to the gawpin' fools below,
'What world's this 'ere
That I've come near?'
Fer I'll make 'em believe I'm a chap f'm the moon!
An' I'll try a race 'ith their ol' bulloon."

He crept from his bed;
And, seeing the others were gone, he said,

"I'm gittin' over the cold'n my head."

And away he sped,
To open the wonderful box in the shed.

His brothers had walked but a little way,
When Jotham to Nathan chanced to say,
"What is the feller up to, hey?"
"Do'no': the's suthin' ur other to pay,
Ur he wouldn't 'a' stayed to hum to-day."
Says Burke, "His toothache's all'n his eye!
He never'd miss a Fo'th-o'-July,
Ef he hedn't got some machine to try."
Then Sol, the little one, spoke: "By darn!
Le's hurry back an' hide'n the barn,
An' pay him fur tellin' us that yarn!"
"Agreed!" Through the orchard they crept back,
Along by the fences, behind the stack,
And one by one, through a hole in the wall,
In under the dusty barn they crawl,
Dressed in their Sunday garments all;
And a very astonishing sight was that,
When each in his cobwebbed coat and hat
Came up through the floor like an ancient rat.
And there they hid;
And Reuben slid
The fastenings back, and the door undid.
"Keep dark!" said he,
"While I squint an' sec what the' is to sec."

As knights of old put on their mail,—
From head to foot an iron suit,
Iron jacket and iron boot,
Iron breeches, and on the head
No hat, but an iron pot instead,
And under the chin the bail
(I believe they call the thing a helm),
Then sallied forth to overwhelm
The dragons and pagans that plagued the realm,—
So this *modern* knight

Prepared for flight,
Put on his wings and strapped them tight,
Jointed and jaunty, strong and light,—
Buckled them fast to shoulder and hip;
Ten feet they measured from top to tip!
And a helm had he, but that he wore,
Not on his head, like those of yore,
But more like the helm of a ship.
“Hush!” Reuben said,
“He’s up in the shed!
He’s opened the winder,—I see his head!
He stretches it out, an’ pokes it about,
Lookin’ to see ‘f the coast is clear
An’ nobody near:
Guess he do’no’ who’s hid in here!
He’s riggin’ a spring-board over the sill!
Stop laffin’, Solomon! Burke, keep still!
He’s a climbin’ out now—Of all the things!
What’s he got on? I van, it’s wings!
An’ that t’other thing? I vum, it’s a tail!
An’ there he sets, like a hawk on a rail!
Steppin’ careful, he travels the length
Of his spring-board, and teeters to try its strength.
Now he stretches his wings, like a monstrous bat,
Peeps over his shoulder, this way an’ that,
Fur to see ‘f the ‘s any one passin’ by;
But the ‘s on’y a ca’f an’ a goslin’ nigh.
They turn up at him a wonderin’ eye,
To see— The dragon! he’s goin’ to fly!
Away he goes! Jimminy! what a jump!
Flop—flop—an’ plump
To the ground with a thump!
Flutt’rin an’ flound’rin’, all’n in a lump!”

As a demon is hurled by an angel’s spear,
Heels over head, to his proper sphere,—
Heels over head and head over heels,
Dizzily down the abyss he wheels,—
So fell Darius. Upon his crown,

In the midst of the barn-yard, he came down,
In a wonderful whirl of tangled strings,
Broken braces and broken springs,
Broken tail and broken wings,
Shooting-stars, and various things,
Barn-yard litter of straw and chaff,
And much that wasn't so sweet by half.
Away with a bellow fled the calf;
And what was that? Did the gosling laugh?
'Tis a merry roar from the old barn door,
And he hears the voice of Jotham crying,
"Say, D'rius! how do you like flyin'?"
Slowly, ruefully, where he lay,
Darius just turned and looked that way,
As he stanch'd his sorrowful nose with his cuff.
"Wal, I like flyin' well enough,"
He said; "but the' ain't sich a thunderin' sight
O' fun in't when ye come to light."

I just have room for the MORAL here:
And this is the moral: Stick to your sphere.
Or, if you insist, as you have the right,
On spreading your wings for a loftier flight,
The moral is, Take care how you light.

A Piano in Arkansas

WE SHALL never forget the excitement which seized upon the inhabitants of the little village of Hardscrabble as the report spread through the community that a real piano had actually arrived within its precincts.

Speculation was afloat as to its appearance and its use. The name was familiar to everybody; but what it precisely meant, no one could tell. That it had legs was certain; for a stray volume of some literary traveler was one of the most conspicuous works in the floating library of Hardscrabble, and said traveler stated that he had seen a piano somewhere in New England with pantalets on; also, an old foreign paper was brought forward, in which there was an advertisement headed "Soirée," which informed the "citizens, generally," that Mr. Bobolink would preside at the piano.

This was presumed by several wiseacres, who had been to a menagerie, to mean that Mr. Bobolink stirred the piano with a long pole, in the same way that the showman did the lions and rhi-no-ce-rus.

So, public opinion was in favor of its being an animal, though a harmless one; for there had been a land-speculator through the village a few weeks previously, who distributed circulars of a "Female Academy" for the accomplishment of young ladies. These circulars distinctly stated "the use of the piano to be one dollar per month."

From Colonel Thorpe's Scenes of Arkansas, by Thomas Bangs Thorpe.

One knowing old chap said, if they would tell him what so-i-ree meant, he would tell them what a piano was, and no mistake.

The owner of this strange instrument was no less than a very quiet and very respectable late merchant of a little town somewhere "north," who, having failed at home, had emigrated into the new and hospitable country of Arkansas, for the purpose of bettering his fortune and escaping the heartless sympathy of his more lucky neighbors, who seemed to consider him a very bad and degraded man because he had become honestly poor.

The new-comers were strangers, of course. The house in which they were setting up their furniture was too little arranged "to admit of calls"; and, as the family seemed very little disposed to court society, all prospects of immediately solving the mystery that hung about the piano seemed hopeless. In the meantime, public opinion was "rife."

The depository of this strange thing was looked upon by the passers-by with indefinable awe; and, as noises unfamiliar sometimes reached the street, it was presumed that the piano made them, and the excitement rose higher than ever. In the midst of it, one or two old ladies, presuming upon their age and respectability, called upon the strangers and inquired after their health, and offered their services and friendship; meantime, everything in the house was eyed with great intensity, but, seeing nothing strange, a hint was given about the piano. One of the new family observed, carelessly, "that it had been much injured by bringing out, that the damp had affected its tones, and that one of its legs was so injured that it would not stand up, and for the present it would not ornament the parlor."

Here was an explanation indeed: injured in bringing out; damp affecting its tones; leg broken. "Poor thing!" ejaculated the old ladies, with real sympathy, as they proceeded homeward; "traveling has evidently fatigued it; the Mass-is-sip fogs has given it a cold, poor thing!" and they wished to see it with increased curiosity.

The "village" agreed that if Moses Mercer, familiarly called "Mo Mercer," was in town, they would have a description of the piano, and the uses to which it was put; and, fortunately, in the midst of the excitement "Mo" arrived, he having been temporarily absent on a hunting-expedition.

Moses Mercer was the only son of "old Mercer," who was, and had been, in the State Senate ever since Arkansas was admitted into the "Union." Mo from this fact received great glory, of course; his father's greatness alone would have stamped him with superiority; but his having been twice in the "Capitol" when the legislature was in session stamped his claims to pre-eminence over all competitors.

Mo Mercer was the oracle of the renowned village of Hardscrabble.

"Mo" knew everything; he had all the consequence and complacency of a man who had never seen his equal, and never expected to. "Mo" bragged extensively upon his having been to the "Capitol" twice,—of his there having been in the most "fashionable society,"—of having seen the world. His return to town was therefore received with a shout. The arrival of the piano was announced to him, and he alone of all the community was not astonished at the news.

His insensibility was considered wonderful. He treated the piano as a thing that he was used to, and went on, among other things, to say that he had seen more pianos in the "Capitol," than he had ever seen woodchucks, and that it was not an animal, but a musical instrument played upon by the ladies; and he wound up his description by saying that the way "the dear creatures could pull music out of it was a caution to hoarse owls."

The new turn given to the piano-excitement in Hardscrabble by Mo Mercer was like pouring oil on fire to extinguish it, for it blazed out with more vigor than ever. That it was a musical instrument made it a rarer thing in that wild country than if it had been an animal, and people of all sizes, colors, and degrees were dying to see and hear it.

Jim Cash was Mo Mercer's right-hand man: in the language of refined society, he was "Mo's toady"; in the language of Hardscrabble, he was "Mo's wheel-horse." Cash believed in Mo Mercer with an abandonment that was perfectly ridiculous. Mr. Cash was dying to see the piano, and the first opportunity he had alone with his Quixote he expressed the desire that was consuming his vitals.

"We'll go at once and see it," said Mercer.

"Strangers!" echoed the frightened Cash.

"Humbug! Do you think I have visited the 'Capitol' twice, and don't know how to treat fashionable society? Come along at once, Cash," said Mercer.

Off the pair started, Mercer all confidence, and Cash all fears as to the propriety of the visit. These fears Cash frankly expressed; but Mercer repeated for the thousandth time his experience in the fashionable society of the "Capitol, and pianos," which he said "was synonymous"; and he finally told Cash, to comfort him, that, however abashed and ashamed he might be in the presence of the ladies, "he needn't fear of sticking, for he would pull him through."

A few minutes' walk brought the parties on the broad galleries of the house that contained the object of so much curiosity. The doors and windows were closed, and a suspicious look was on everything.

"Do they always keep a house closed up this way that has a piano in it?" asked Cash mysteriously.

"Certainly," replied Mercer: "the damp would destroy its tones."

Repeated knocks at the doors, and finally at the window, satisfied both Cash and Mercer that nobody was at home. In the midst of their disappointment, Cash discovered a singular machine at the end of the gallery, crossed by bars and rollers and surmounted with an enormous crank. Cash approached it on tiptoe; he had a presentiment that he beheld the object of his curiosity, and, as its intricate character unfolded itself, he gazed with distended eyes, and asked Mercer, with breathless anxiety, what that strange and incomprehensible box was.

Mercer turned to the thing as coolly as a north wind to an icicle, and said, that was *it*.

"That *it*!" exclaimed Cash, opening his eyes still wider; and then, recovering himself, he asked to see "the tone."

Mercer pointed to the cross-bars and rollers. With trembling hands, with a resolution that would enable a man to be scalped without winking, Cash reached out his hand and seized the handle of the crank (Cash, at heart, was a brave and fearless man). He gave it a turn: the machinery grated harshly, and seemed to clamor for something to be put in its maw.

"What delicious sounds!" said Cash.

"Beautiful!" observed the complacent Mercer, at the same time seizing Cash's arm and asking him to desist, for fear of breaking the instrument or getting it out of tune.

The simple caution was sufficient; and Cash, in the joy of the moment at what he had done and seen, looked as conceited as Mo Mercer himself.

Busy indeed was Cash, from this time forward, in explaining to gaping crowds the exact appearance of the piano, how he had actually taken hold of it, and, as his friend Mo Mercer observed, "pulled music out of it."

The curiosity of the village was thus allayed, and consequently died comparatively away,—Cash, however, having risen to almost as much importance as Mo Mercer, for having seen and handled the thing.

Our "Northern family" knew little or nothing of all this excitement; they received meanwhile the visits and congratulations of the hospitable villagers, and resolved to give a grand party to return some of the kindness they had received, and the piano was, for the first time, moved into the parlor. No invitation on this occasion was neglected; early at the post was every visitor, for it was rumored that Miss Patience Doolittle would, in the course of the evening, "perform on the piano."

The excitement was immense. The supper was passed over with a contempt rivaling that which is cast upon an excellent farce played preparatory to a dull tragedy in which the star is to appear. The furniture was all critically examined, but nothing could be discovered answering Cash's description. An enormously thick-leafed table with a "spread" upon it attracted little attention, timber being so very cheap in a new country, and so everybody expected soon to see the piano "brought in."

Mercer, of course, was the hero of the evening: he talked much and loudly. Cash, as well as several young ladies, went into hysterics at his wit. Mercer, as the evening wore away, grew exceedingly conceited, even for him; and he graciously asserted that the company present reminded him of his two visits to the "Capitol," and other associations equally exclusive and peculiar.

The evening wore on apace, and still no piano. That hope deferred which maketh the heart sick was felt by some elderly ladies and by a few younger ones; and Mercer was solicited to

ask Miss Patience Doolittle to favor the company with the presence of the piano.

"Certainly," said Mercer, and with the grace of a city dandy he called upon the lady to gratify all present with a little music, prefacing his request with the remark that if she was fatigued "his friend Cash would give the machine a turn."

Miss Patience smiled, and looked at Cash.

Cash's knees trembled.

All eyes in the room turned upon him.

Cash trembled all over.

Miss Patience said she was gratified to hear that Mr. Cash was a musician; she admired people who had a musical taste. Whereupon Cash fell into a chair, as he afterward observed, "chawed up."

Oh that Beau Brummel or any of his admirers could have seen Mo Mercer all this while! Calm as a summer morning, complacent as a newly-painted sign, he smiled and patronized, and was the only unexcited person in the room.

Miss Patience rose. A sigh escaped from all present: the piano was evidently to be brought in. She approached the thick-leaved table and removed the covering, throwing it carelessly and gracefully aside, opened the instrument, and presented the beautiful arrangement of dark and white keys.

Mo Mercer at this, for the first time in his life, looked confused: he was Cash's authority in his descriptions of the appearance of the piano; while Cash himself began to recover the moment that he ceased to be an object of attention. Many a whisper now ran through the room as to the "tones," and more particularly the "crank"; none could see them.

Miss Patience took her seat, ran her fingers over a few octaves, and if "Moses in Egypt" was not perfectly *executed*, Moses in Hardscrabble *was*. The dulcet sound ceased. "Miss," said Cash, the moment that he could express himself, so entranced was he by the music,—“Miss Doolittle, what was the instrument Mo Mercer showed me in your gallery once, it went by a crank and had rollers in it?”

It was now the time for Miss Patience to blush: so away went the blood from confusion to her cheeks. She hesitated, stam-

mered, and said, if Mr. Cash must know, it was a-a-a-*Yankee washing-machine*.

The name grated on Mo Mercer's ears as if rusty nails had been thrust into them; the heretofore invulnerable Mercer's knees trembled, the sweat started to his brow, as he heard the taunting whispers of "visiting the Capitol twice" and seeing pianos as plenty as woodchucks.

The fashionable vices of envy and maliciousness were that moment sown in the village of Hardscrabble; and Mo Mercer, the great, the confident, the happy and self-possessed, surprising as it may seem, was the first victim sacrificed to their influence.

Time wore on, and pianos became common, and Mo Mercer less popular; and he finally disappeared altogether, on the evening of the day on which a Yankee peddler of notions sold to the highest bidder, "six patent, warranted, and improved Mo Mercer pianos."

The Casting Away of Mrs. Lecks and Mrs. Aleshine

I WAS on my way from San Francisco to Yokohama, when in a very desultory and gradual manner I became acquainted with Mrs. Lecks and Mrs. Aleshine. The steamer, on which I was making a moderately rapid passage toward the land of the legended fan and the lacquered box, carried a fair complement of passengers, most of whom were Americans; and, among these, my attention was attracted from the very first day of the voyage to two middle-aged women who appeared to me very unlike the ordinary traveler or tourist. At first sight they might have been taken for farmers' wives who, for some unusual reason, had determined to make a voyage across the Pacific; but, on closer observation, one would have been more apt to suppose that they belonged to the families of prosperous tradesmen in some little country town, where, besides the arts of rural housewifery, there would be opportunities of becoming acquainted in some degree with the ways and manners of the outside world. They were not of that order of persons who generally take first-class passages on steamships, but the stateroom occupied by Mrs. Lecks and Mrs. Aleshine was one of the best in the vessel.

From *The Casting Away of Mrs. Lecks and Mrs. Aleshine*, by Frank R. Stockton.

There is not sufficient room in this volume, unfortunately, to print this engaging novel in its entirety. I have contented myself with including Part I, with a few cuts, and a few sentences from Part II. This admitted compromise, between including nothing from the book (unthinkable!) and including all of it, gets the two ladies within sight of dry land and fresh adventures.—Editor.

Mrs. Lecks was a rather tall woman, large-boned and muscular, and her well-browned countenance gave indications of that conviction of superiority which gradually grows up in the minds of those who for a long time have had absolute control of the destinies of a state, or the multifarious affairs of a country household. Mrs. Aleshine was somewhat younger than her friend, somewhat shorter, and a great deal fatter. She had the same air of reliance upon her individual worth that characterized Mrs. Lecks, but there was a certain geniality about her which indicated that she would have a good deal of forbearance for those who never had had the opportunity or the ability of becoming the thoroughly good housewife which she was herself.

These two worthy dames spent the greater part of their time on deck, where they always sat together in a place at the stern of the vessel which was well sheltered from wind and weather. As they sat thus they were generally employed in knitting, although this occupation did not prevent them from keeping up what seemed to me, as I passed them in my walks about the deck, a continuous conversation. From a question which Mrs. Lecks once asked me about a distant sail, our acquaintance began. There was no one on board for whose society I particularly cared, and as there was something quaint and odd about these countrywomen on the ocean which interested me, I was glad to vary my solitary promenades by an occasional chat with them. They were not at all backward in giving me information about themselves. They were both widows, and Mrs. Aleshine was going out to Japan to visit a son who had a position there in a mercantile house. Mrs. Lecks had no children, and was accompanying her friend because, as she said, she would not allow Mrs. Aleshine to make such a voyage as that by herself, and because, being quite able to do so, she did not know why she should not see the world as well as other people.

These two friends were not educated women. They made frequent mistakes in their grammar, and a good deal of Middle States provincialism showed itself in their pronunciation and expressions. But although they brought many of their rural ideas to sea with them, they possessed a large share of that common sense which is available anywhere, and they frequently made use of it in a manner which was very amusing to me. I think, also,

that they found in me a quarry of information concerning nautical matters, foreign countries, and my own affairs, the working of which helped to make us very good ship friends.

Our steamer touched at the Sandwich Islands; and it was a little more than two days after we left Honolulu that, about nine o'clock in the evening, we had the misfortune to come into collision with an eastern-bound vessel. This vessel, which appeared to be a small steamer, struck us with great force near our bows, and then, backing, disappeared into the fog, and we never saw or heard of her again.

It was soon discovered that our injuries were serious and, indeed, disastrous. The hull of our steamer had been badly shattered on the port bow, and the water came in at a most alarming rate. For nearly two hours the crew and many of the passengers worked at the pumps, and everything possible was done to stop the enormous leak; but all labor to save the vessel was found to be utterly unavailing, and a little before midnight the captain announced that it was impossible to keep the steamer afloat, and that we must all take to the boats. The night was now clear, the stars were bright, and, as there was but little wind, the sea was comparatively smooth. With all these advantages, the captain assured us that there was no reason to apprehend danger, and he thought that by noon of the following day we could easily make a small inhabited island, where we could be sheltered and cared for until we should be taken off by some passing vessel.

There was plenty of time for all necessary preparations, and these were made with much order and subordination. Everybody obeyed the captain's orders, and all prepared themselves for the transfer to the boats. The first officer came among us, and told each of us what boats we were to take, and where we were to place ourselves on deck. I was assigned to a large boat which was to be principally occupied by steerage passengers; and as I came up from my stateroom, where I had gone to secure my money and some portable valuables, I met on the companionway Mrs. Lecks and Mrs. Aleshine, who expressed considerable dissatisfaction when they found that I was not going in the boat with them. They, however, hurried below, and I went on deck, where in about ten minutes I was joined by Mrs. Lecks, who apparently

had been looking for me. She told me she had something very particular to say to me, and conducted me toward the stern of the vessel, where, behind one of the deck-houses, we found Mrs. Aleshine.

"Look here," said Mrs. Lecks, leading me to the rail, and pointing downward; "do you see that boat there? It has been let down, and there is nobody in it. The boat on the other side has just gone off, full to the brim. I never saw so many people crowded into a boat. The other ones will be just as packed, I expect. I don't see why we shouldn't take this empty boat, now we've got a chance, instead of squeezin' ourselves into those crowded ones. If any of the other people come afterward, why, we shall have our choice of seats, and that's considerable of a p'int, I should say, in a time like this."

"That's so," said Mrs. Aleshine; "and me and Mrs. Lecks would 'a' got right in when we saw the boat was empty, if we hadn't been afraid to be there without any man, for it might have floated off, and neither of us don't know nothin' about rowin'. And then Mrs. Lecks she thought of you, supposin' a young man who knew so much about the sea would know how to row."

"Oh, yes," said I; "but I cannot imagine why this boat should have been left empty. I see a keg of water in it, and the oars, and some tin cans, and so I suppose it has been made ready for somebody. Will you wait here a minute until I run forward and see how things are going on there?"

Amidships and forward I saw that there was some confusion among the people who were not yet in their boats, and I found that there was to be rather more crowding than at first was expected. People who had supposed that they were to go in a certain boat found there no place, and were hurrying to other boats. It now became plain to me that no time should be lost in getting into the small boat which Mrs. Lecks had pointed out, so I slipped quietly aft, and joined Mrs. Lecks and Mrs. Aleshine.

"We must get in as soon as we can," said I, in a low voice, "for this boat may be discovered, and then there will be a rush for it. I suspect it may have been reserved for the captain and some of the officers, but we have as much right in it as they."

"And more too," replied Mrs. Lecks; "for we had nothin' to do with the steerin' and smashin'."

"But how are we goin' to get down there?" said Mrs. Aleshine. "There's no steps."

"That is true," said I. "I shouldn't wonder if this boat is to be taken forward when the others are filled. We must scramble down as well as we can by the tackle at the bow and stern. I'll get in first and keep her close to the ship's side."

"That's goin' to be a scratchy business," said Mrs. Lecks, "and I'm of the opinion we ought to wait till the ship has sunk a little more, so we'll be nearer to the boat."

"It won't do to wait," said I, "or we shall not get in it at all."

"And goodness gracious!" exclaimed Mrs. Aleshine, "I can't stand here and feel the ship sinkin' cold-blooded under me, till we've got where we can make an easy jump!"

"Very well, then," said Mrs. Lecks, "we won't wait. But the first thing to be done is for each one of us to put on one of these life-preservers. Two of them I brought from Mrs. Aleshine's and my cabin, and the other one I got next door, where the people had gone off and left it on the floor. I thought if anythin' happened on the way to the island, these would give us a chance to look about us; but it seems to me we'll need 'em more gettin' down them ropes than anywhere else. I did intend puttin' on two myself to make up for Mrs. Aleshine's fat; but you must wear one of 'em, sir, now that you are goin' to join the party."

As I knew that two life-preservers would not be needed by Mrs. Lecks, and would greatly inconvenience her, I accepted the one offered me, but declined to put it on until it should be necessary, as it would interfere with my movements.

"Very well," said Mrs. Lecks, "if you think you are safe in getting down without it. But Mrs. Aleshine and me will put ours on before we begin sailor-scramblin'. We know how to do it, for we tried 'em on soon after we started from San Francisco. And now, Barb'ry Aleshine, are you sure you've got everythin' you want? for it'll be no use thinkin' about anythin' you've forgot after the ship has sunk out of sight."

"There's nothin' else I can think of," said Mrs. Aleshine; "at least, nothin' I can carry; and so I suppose we may as well begin,

for your talk of the ship sinkin' under our feet gives me a sort o' feelin' like an oyster creepin' up and down my back."

Mrs. Lecks looked over the side at the boat, into which I had already descended. "I'll go first, Barb'ry Alesshine," said she, "and show you how."

The sea was quiet, and the steamer had already sunk so much that Mrs. Lecks's voice sounded frightfully near me, although she spoke in a low tone.

"Watch me," said she to her companion. "I'm goin' to do just as he did, and you must follow in the same way."

So saying, she stepped on a bench by the rail; then, with one foot on the rail itself, she seized the ropes which hung from one of the davits to the bow of the boat. She looked down for a moment, and then she drew back.

"It's no use," she said. "We must wait until she sinks more, and I can get in easier."

This remark made me feel nervous. I did not know at what moment there might be a rush for this boat, nor when, indeed, the steamer might go down. The boat amidships on our side had rowed away some minutes before, and through the darkness I could distinguish another boat, near the bows, pushing off. It would be too late now for us to try to get into any other boat, and I did not feel that there was time enough for me to take this one to a place where the two women could more easily descend to her. Standing upright, I urged them not to delay.

"You see," said I, "I can reach you as soon as you swing yourself off the ropes, and I'll help you down."

"If you're sure you can keep us from comin' down too sudden, we'll try it," said Mrs. Lecks; "but I'd as soon be drowned as to get to an island with a broken leg. And as to Mrs. Alesshine, if she was to slip she'd go slam through that boat to the bottom of the sea. Now, then, be ready! I'm comin' down."

So saying, she swung herself off, and she was then so near me that I was able to seize her and make the rest of her descent comparatively easy. Mrs. Alesshine proved to be a more difficult subject. Even after I had a firm grasp of her capacious waist she refused to let go the ropes, for fear that she might drop into the ocean instead of the boat. But the reproaches of Mrs. Lecks and

the downward weight of myself made her loosen her nervous grip; and, although we came very near going overboard together, I safely placed her on one of the thwarts.

I now unhooked the tackle from the stern; but before casting off at the bow I hesitated, for I did not wish to desert any of those who might be expecting to embark in this boat. But I could hear no approaching footsteps, and from my position, close to the side of the steamer, I could see nothing. Therefore I cast off, and taking the oars, I pushed away and rowed to a little distance, where I could get whatever view was possible of the deck of the steamer. Seeing no forms moving about, I called out, and, receiving no answer, I shouted again at the top of my voice. I waited for nearly a minute, and, hearing nothing and seeing nothing, I became convinced that no one was left on the vessel.

"They are all gone," said I, "and we will pull after them as fast as we can."

And I began to row toward the bow of the steamer, in the direction which the other boats had taken.

"It's a good thing you can row," said Mrs. Lecks, settling herself comfortably in the stern-sheets, "for what Mrs. Aleshire and me would ha' done with them oars I am sure I don't know."

"I'd never have got into this boat," said Mrs. Aleshire, "if Mr. Craig hadn't been here."

"No, indeed," replied her friend. "You'd ha' gone to the bottom, hangin' for dear life to them ropes."

When I had rounded the bow of the steamer, which appeared to me to be rapidly settling in the water, I perceived at no great distance several lights, which of course belonged to the other boats, and I rowed as hard as I could, hoping to catch up with them, or at least to keep sufficiently near. It might be my duty to take off some of the people who had crowded into the other boats, probably supposing that this one had been loaded and gone. How such a mistake could have taken place I could not divine, and it was not my business to do so. Quite certain that no one was left on the sinking steamer, all I had to do was to row after the other boats, and to overtake them as soon as possible. I thought it would not take me very long to do this, but after rowing for half an hour, Mrs. Aleshire remarked that the

lights seemed as far off, if not farther, than when we first started after them. Turning, I saw that this was the case, and was greatly surprised. With only two passengers I ought soon to have come up with those heavily laden boats. But after I had thought over it a little, I considered that as each of them was probably pulled by half a dozen stout sailors, it was not so very strange that they should make as good or better headway than I did.

It was not very long after this that Mrs. Lecks said that she thought that the lights on the other boats must be going out, and that this, most probably, was due to the fact that the sailors had forgotten to fill their lanterns before they started. "That sort of thing often happens," she said, "when people leave a place in a hurry."

But when I turned around, and peered over the dark waters, it was quite plain to me that it was not want of oil, but increased distance, which made those lights so dim. I could now perceive but three of them. We were being left behind, that was certain, and all I could do was to row on as long and as well as I could in the direction which the other boats had taken.

"I don't believe this boat has been emptied out since the last rain," said Mrs. Aleshine, "for my feet are wet, though I didn't notice it before."

At this I shipped my oars, and began to examine the boat. The bottom was covered with a movable floor of slats, and as I put my hand down I could feel the water welling up between the slats. The flooring was in sections, and lifting the one beneath me, I felt under it, and put my hand into six or eight inches of water.

The exact state of the case was now as plain to me as if it had been posted up on a bulletin-board. This boat had been found to be unseaworthy, and its use had been forbidden, all the people having been crowded into the others. This had caused confusion at the last moment, and, of course, we were supposed to be on some one of the other boats.

And now here was I, in the middle of the Pacific Ocean, in a leaky boat, with two middle-aged women!

"Anythin' the matter with the floor?" asked Mrs. Lecks.

I let the section fall back into its place, and looked aft. By the starlight I could see that my two companions had each fixed

upon me a steadfast gaze. They evidently felt that something was the matter, and wanted to know what it was. I did not hesitate for a moment to inform them. They appeared to me to be women whom it would be neither advisable nor possible to deceive in a case like this.

"This boat has a leak in it," I said. "There is a lot of water in her already, and that is the reason we have got along so slowly."

"And that is why," said Mrs. Aleshine, "it was left empty. We ought to have known better than to expect to have a whole boat just for three of us. It would have been much more sensible, I think, if we had tried to squeeze into one of the others."

"Now, Barb'ry Aleshine," said Mrs. Lecks, "don't you begin findin' fault with good fortune, when it comes to you. Here we've got a comfortable boat, with room enough to set easy and stretch out if we want to. If the water is comin' in, what we've got to do is to get it out again just as fast as we can. What's the best way to do that, Mr. Craig?"

"We must bail her out, and lose no time about it," said I. "If I can find the leak I may be able to stop it."

I now looked about for something to bail with, and the two women aided actively in the search. I found one leather scoop in the bow; but as it was well that we should all go to work, I took two tin cans that had been put in by some one who had begun to provision the boat, and proceeded to cut the tops from them with my jack-knife.

"Don't lose what's in 'em," said Mrs. Lecks; "that is, if it's anythin' we'd be likely to want to eat. If it's tomatoes, pour it into the sea, for nobody ought to eat tomatoes put up in tins."

I hastily passed the cans to Mrs. Lecks, and I saw her empty the contents of one into the sea, and those of the other on a newspaper which she took from her pocket and placed in the stern.

I pulled up the movable floor and threw it overboard, and then began to bail.

"I thought," said Mrs. Aleshine, "that they always had pumps for leaks."

"Now, Barb'ry Aleshine," said Mrs. Lecks, "just gether your-

self up on one of them seats, and go to work. The less talkin' we do, and the more scoopin', the better it'll be for us."

I soon perceived that it would have been difficult to find two more valuable assistants in the bailing of a boat than Mrs. Lecks and Mrs. Aleshine. They were evidently used to work, and were able to accommodate themselves to the unusual circumstances in which they were placed. We threw out the water very rapidly, and every little while I stopped bailing and felt about to see if I could discover where it came in. As these attempts met with no success, I gave them up after a time, and set about bailing with new vigor, believing that if we could get the boat nearly dry I should surely be able to find the leak.

But, after working half an hour more, I found that the job would be a long one; and if we all worked at once we would all be tired out at once, and that might be disastrous. Therefore I proposed that we should take turns in resting, and Mrs. Aleshine was ordered to stop work for a time. After this Mrs. Lecks took a rest, and when she went to work I stopped bailing and began again to search for the leak.

For about two hours we worked in this way, and then I concluded it was useless to continue any longer this vain exertion. With three of us bailing we were able to keep the water at the level we first found it; but with only two at work, it slightly gained upon us, so that now there was more water in the boat than when we first discovered it. The boat was an iron one, the leak in it I could neither find nor remedy, and it was quite plain that the water was now coming in more rapidly than it did at first. We were very tired, and even Mrs. Lecks, who had all along counseled us to keep at work, and not to waste one breath in talking, now admitted that it was of no use to try to get the water out of that boat.

It had been some hours since I had used the oars, but whether we had drifted, or remained where we were when I stopped rowing, of course I could not know; but this mattered very little; our boat was slowly sinking beneath us, and it could make no difference whether we went down in one spot or another. I sat and racked my brain to think what could be done in this fearful emergency. To bail any longer was useless labor, and what else was there that we could do?

"When will it be time," asked Mrs. Lecks, "for us to put on the life-preservers? When the water gets nearly to the seats?"

I answered that we should not wait any longer than that, but in my own mind I could not see any advantage in putting them on at all. Why should we wish to lengthen our lives by a few hours of helpless floating upon the ocean?

"Very good," said Mrs. Lecks; "I'll keep a watch on the water. One of them cans was filled with lobster, which would be more than likely to disagree with us, and I've throwed it out; but the other had baked beans in it, and the best thing we can do is to eat some of these right away. They are mighty nourishin', and will keep up strength as well as anythin', and then, as you said there's a keg of water in the boat, we can all take a drink of that, and it'll make us feel like new cre'tur's. You'll have to take the beans in your hands, for we've got no spoons nor forks."

Mrs. Lecks and Mrs. Aleshine were each curled up out of reach of the water, the first in the stern, and the other on the aft thwart. The day was now beginning to break, and we could see about us very distinctly. Before reaching out her hands to receive her beans, Mrs. Aleshine washed them in the water in the boat, remarking at the same time that she might as well make use of it since it was there. Having then wiped her hands on some part of her apparel, they were filled with beans from the newspaper held by Mrs. Lecks, and these were passed over to me. I was very hungry, and when I had finished my beans I agreed with my companions that although they would have been a great deal better if heated up with butter, pepper, and salt, they were very comforting as they were. One of the empty cans was now passed to me, and after having been asked by Mrs. Lecks to rinse it out very carefully, we all satisfied our taste from the water in the keg.

"Cold baked beans and lukewarm water ain't exactly company vittles," said Mrs. Aleshine, "but there's many a poor wretch would be glad to get 'em."

I could not imagine any poor wretch who would be glad of the food together with the attending circumstances; but I did not say so.

"The water is just one finger from the bottom of the seat,"

said Mrs. Lecks, who had been stooping over to measure, "and it's time to put on the life-preservers."

"Very good," said Mrs. Aleshine; "hand me mine."

Each of us now buckled on a life-preserver, and as I did so I stood up upon a thwart and looked about me. It was quite light now, and I could see for a long distance over the surface of the ocean, which was gently rolling in wide, smooth swells. As we rose upon the summit of one of these I saw a dark spot upon the water, just on the edge of our near horizon. "Is that the steamer?" I thought; "and has she not yet sunk?"

At this there came to me a glimmering of courageous hope. If the steamer had remained afloat so long, it was probable that on account of water-tight compartments, or for some other reason, her sinking had reached its limit, and that if we could get back to her we might be saved. But, alas, how were we to get back to her? This boat would sink long, long before I could row that distance.

However, I soon proclaimed the news to my companions, whereupon Mrs. Aleshine prepared to stand upon a thwart and see for herself. But Mrs. Lecks restrained her.

"Don't make things worse, Barb'ry Aleshine," said she, "by tumblin' overboard. If we've got to go into the water, let us do it decently and in order. If that's the ship, Mr. Craig, don't you suppose we can float ourselves to it in some way?"

I replied that by the help of a life-preserver a person who could swim might reach the ship.

"But neither of us can swim," said Mrs. Lecks, "for we've lived where the water was never more'n a foot deep, except in time of freshets, when there's no swimmin' for man or beast. But if we see you swim, perhaps we can follow, after a fashion. At any rate, we must do the best we can, and that's all there is to be done."

"The water now," remarked Mrs. Aleshine, "is so near to the bottom of my seat that I've got to stand up, tumble overboard or no."

"All right," remarked Mrs. Lecks; "we'd better all stand up, and let the boat sink under us. That will save our jumpin' overboard, or rollin' out any which way, which might be awkward."

"Goodness gracious mel" exclaimed Mrs. Aleshine. "You set the oysters creepin' over me again! First you talk of the ship sinkin' under us, and now it's the boat goin' to the bottom under our feet. Before any sinkin' 's to be done I'd ruther get out."

"Now, Barb'ry Aleshine," said Mrs. Lecks, "stand up straight, and don't talk so much. It'll be a great deal better to be let down gradual than to flop into the water all of a bunch."

"Very well," said Mrs. Aleshine; "it may be best to get used to it by degrees; but I must say I wish I was home."

As for me, I would have much preferred to jump overboard at once, instead of waiting in this cold-blooded manner; but as my companions had so far preserved their presence of mind, I did not wish to do anything which might throw them into a panic. I believe there would be no danger from the suction caused by the sinking of a small boat like this, and if we took care not to entangle ourselves with it in any way, we might as well follow Mrs. Lecks's advice as not. So we all stood up, Mrs. Lecks in the stern, I in the bow, and Mrs. Aleshine on a thwart between us. The last did not appear to have quite room enough for a steady footing, but, as she remarked, it did not matter very much, as the footing, broad or narrow, would not be there very long.

I am used to swimming, and have never hesitated to take a plunge into river or ocean, but I must admit that it was very trying to my nerves to stand up this way and wait for a boat to sink beneath me. How the two women were affected I do not know. They said nothing, but their faces indicated that something disagreeable was about to happen, and that the less that was said about it the better.

The boat had now sunk so much that the water was around Mrs. Aleshine's feet, her standing-place being rather lower than ours. I made myself certain that there were no ropes nor any other means of entanglement near my companions or myself, and then I waited. There seemed to be a good deal of buoyancy in the bow and stern of the boat, and it was a frightfully long time in sinking. The suspense became so utterly unendurable that I was tempted to put one foot on the edge of the boat, and, by tipping it, put an end to this nerve-rack; but I refrained, for I probably would throw the women off their balance, when they might fall against some part of the boat, and do themselves a

hurt. I had just relinquished this intention, when two little waves seemed to rise one on each side of Mrs. Aleshine, and gently flowing over the side of the boat, they flooded her feet with water.

"Hold your breaths!" I shouted. And now I experienced a sensation which must have been very like that which comes to a condemned criminal at the first indication of the pulling of the drop. Then there was a horrible sinking, a gurgle, and a swash, and the ocean over which I had been gazing appeared to rise up and envelop me.

In a moment, however, my head was out of the water, and, looking hastily about me, I saw, close by, the heads and shoulders of Mrs. Lecks and Mrs. Aleshine. The latter was vigorously winking her eyes and blowing from her mouth some sea-water that had got into it; but as soon as her eyes fell upon me she exclaimed: "That was ever so much more suddint than I thought it was goin' to be!"

"Are you both all right?"

"I suppose I am," said Mrs. Aleshine, "but I never thought that a person with a life-preserver on would go clean under the water."

"But since you've come up again, you ought to be satisfied," said Mrs. Lecks. "And now," she added, turning her face toward me, "which way ought we to try to swim? and have we got everythin' we want to take with us?"

"What we haven't got we can't get," remarked Mrs. Aleshine; "and as for swimmin', I expect I'm goin' to make a poor hand at it."

I had a hope, which was not quite strong enough to be a belief, that, supported by their life-preservers, the two women might paddle themselves along; and that, by giving them in turn a helping hand, I might eventually get them to the steamer. There was a strong probability that I would not succeed, but I did not care to think of that.

I now swam in front of my companions, and endeavored to instruct them in the best method of propelling themselves with their arms and their hands. If they succeeded in this, I thought I would give them some further lessons in striking out with their feet. After watching me attentively, Mrs. Lecks did manage to

move herself slowly through the smooth water, but poor Mrs. Aleshine could do nothing but splash.

"If there was anythin' to take hold of," she said to me, "I might get along; but I can't get any grip on the water, though you seem to do it well enough. Look there!" she added in a higher voice. "Isn't that an oar floatin' over there? If you can get that for me, I believe I can row myself much better than I can swim."

This seemed an odd idea, but I swam over to the floating oar, and brought it her. I was about to show her how she could best use it, but she declined my advice.

"If I do it at all," she said, "I must do it in my own way." And taking the oar in her strong hands, she began to ply it on the water very much in the way in which she would handle a broom. At first she dipped the blade too deeply, but, correcting this error, she soon began to paddle herself along at a slow but steady rate.

"Capital!" I cried. "You do that admirably!"

"Anybody who's swept as many rooms as I have," she said, "ought to be able to handle anythin' that can be used like a broom."

"Isn't there another oar?" cried Mrs. Lecks, who had now been left a little distance behind us. "If there is, I want one."

Looking about me, I soon discovered another floating oar, and brought it to Mrs. Lecks, who, after holding it in various positions, so as to get "the hang of it," as she said, soon began to use it with as much skill as that shown by her friend. If either of them had been obliged to use an oar in the ordinary way, I fear they would have had a bad time of it; but, considering the implement in the light of a broom, its use immediately became familiar to them, and they got on remarkably well.

I now took a position a little in advance of my companions, and as I swam slowly they were easily able to keep up with me. Mrs. Aleshine, being so stout, floated much higher out of the water than either Mrs. Lecks or I, and this permitted her to use her oar with a great deal of freedom. Sometimes she would give such a vigorous brush to the water that she would turn herself almost entirely around, but after a little practice she learned to avoid undue efforts of this kind.

I was not positively sure that we were going in the right direction, for my position did not allow me to see very far over the

water; but I remembered that when I was standing up in the boat, and made my discovery, the sun was just about to rise in front of me, while the dark spot on the ocean lay to my left. Judging, therefore, from the present position of the sun, which was not very high, I concluded that we were moving toward the north, and therefore in the right direction. How far off the steamer might be I had no idea, for I was not accustomed to judging distances at sea; but I believed that if we were careful of our strength and if the ocean continued as smooth as it now was, we might eventually reach the vessel, provided she were yet afloat.

"After you are fairly in the water," said Mrs. Aleshine, as she swept along, although without the velocity which that phrase usually implies, "it isn't half so bad as I thought it would be. For one thing, it don't feel a bit salt, although I must say it tasted horribly that way when I first went into it."

"You didn't expect to find pickle-brine, did you?" said Mrs. Lecks. "Though, if it was, I suppose we could float on it settin'."

"And as to bein' cold," said Mrs. Aleshine, "the part of me that's in is actually more comfortable than that which is out."

"There's one thing I would have been afraid of," said Mrs. Lecks, "if we hadn't made preparations for it, and that's sharks."

"Preparations!" I exclaimed. "How in the world did you prepare for sharks?"

"Easy enough," said Mrs. Lecks. "When we went down into our room to get ready to go away in the boats we both put on black stockin's. I've read that sharks never bite colored people, although if they see a white man in the water they'll snap him up as quick as lightnin'; and black stockin's was the nearest we could come to it. You see, I thought as like as not we'd have some sort of an upset before we got through."

"It's a great comfort," remarked Mrs. Aleshine, "and I'm very glad you thought of it, Mrs. Lecks. After this I shall make it a rule: Black stockin's for sharks."

"I suppose in your case," said Mrs. Lecks, addressing me, "dark trousers will do as well."

To which I answered that I sincerely hoped they would.

"Another thing I'm thankful for," said Mrs. Aleshine, "is that I thought to put on a flannel skeert."

"And what's the good of it," said Mrs. Lecks, "when it's soppin' wet?"

"Flannel's flannel," replied her friend, "whether it's wet or dry; and if you'd had the rheumatism as much as I have, you'd know it."

To this Mrs. Lecks replied with a sniff, and asked me how soon I thought we would get sight of the ship; for if we were going the wrong way, and had to turn round and go back, it would certainly be very provoking.

I should have been happy indeed to be able to give a satisfactory answer to this question. Every time that we rose upon a swell I threw a rapid glance around the whole circle of the horizon; and at last, not a quarter of an hour after Mrs. Leck's question, I was rejoiced to see, almost in the direction in which I supposed it ought to be, the dark spot which I had before discovered. I shouted the glad news, and as we rose again my companions strained their eyes in the direction to which I pointed. They both saw it, and were greatly satisfied.

"Now, then," said Mrs. Aleshine, "it seems as if there was somethin' to work for"; and she began to sweep her oar with great vigor.

"If you want to tire yourself out before you get there, Barb'ry Aleshine," said Mrs. Lecks, "you'd better go on in that way. Now what I advise is that we stop rowin' altogether, and have somethin' to eat; for I'm sure we need it to keep up our strength."

"Eat!" I cried. "What are you going to eat? Do you expect to catch fish?"

"And eat 'em raw?" said Mrs. Lecks. "I should think not. But do you suppose, Mr. Craig, that Mrs. Aleshine and me would go off and leave that ship without takin' somethin' to eat by the way? Let's all gether here in a bunch, and see what sort of a meal we can make. And now, Barb'ry Aleshine, if you lay your oar down there on the water, I recommend you to tie it to one of your bonnet-strings, or it'll be floatin' away, and you won't get it again."

As she said this, Mrs. Lecks put her right hand down into the water, and fumbled about, apparently in search of a pocket. I could not but smile as I thought of the condition of food when, for an hour or more, it had been a couple of feet under the

surface of the ocean; but my ideas on the subject were entirely changed when I saw Mrs. Lecks hold up in the air two German sausages, and shake the briny drops from their smooth and glittering surfaces.

"There's nothin'," she said, "like sausages for shipwreck and that kind o' thing. They're very sustainin', and bein' covered with a tight skin, water can't get at 'em, no matter how you carry 'em. I wouldn't bring these out in the boat, because, havin' the beans, we might as well eat them. Have you a knife about you, Mr. Craig?"

I produced a dripping jack-knife, and after the open blade had been waved in the air to dry it a little, Mrs. Lecks proceeded to divide one of the sausages, handing the other to me to hold meanwhile.

"Now don't go eatin' sausages without bread, if you don't want 'em to give you dyspepsy," said Mrs. Aleshine, who was tugging at a submarine pocket.

"I'm very much afraid your bread is all soaked," said Mrs. Lecks.

To which her friend replied that that remained to be seen, and forthwith produced, with a splash, a glass preserve-jar with a metal top.

"I saw this nearly empty, as I looked into the ship's pantry, and I stuffed into it all the soft biscuits it would hold. There was some sort of jam left at the bottom, so that the one who gets the last biscuit will have somethin' of a little spread on it. And now, Mrs. Lecks," she continued triumphantly, as she unscrewed the top, "that rubber ring has kept 'em as dry as chips. I'm mighty glad of it, for I had trouble enough gettin' this jar into my pocket, and gettin' it out, too, for that matter."

Floating thus, with our hands and shoulders above the water, we made a very good meal from the sausages and soft biscuit.

"Barb'ry Aleshine," said Mrs. Lecks, as her friend proceeded to cut the second sausage, "don't you lay that knife down, when you're done with it, as if 't was an oar; for if you do it'll sink, as like as not, about six miles. I've read that the ocean is as deep as that in some places."

"Goodness gracious me!" exclaimed Mrs. Aleshine, "I hopé we are not over one of them deep spots."

"There's no knowin'," said Mrs. Lecks, "but if it's more com-fortin' to think it's shallerer, we'll make up our minds that way. Now, then," she continued, "we'll finish off this meal with a little somethin' to drink. I'm not given to takin' spirits, but I never travel without a little whisky, ready mixed with water, to take if it should be needed."

So saying, she produced from one of her pockets a whisky-flask tightly corked, and of its contents we each took a sip, Mrs. Aleshine remarking that, leaving out being chilled or colicky, we were never likely to need it more than now.

Thus refreshed and strengthened, Mrs. Lecks and Mrs. Aleshine took up their oars, while I swam slightly in advance, as before. When, with occasional intermissions of rest, and a good deal of desultory conversation, we had swept and swam for about an hour, Mrs. Lecks suddenly exclaimed: "I can see that thing ever so much plainer now, and I don't believe it's a ship at all. To me it looks like bushes."

"You're mighty long-sighted without your specs," said Mrs. Aleshine, "and I'm not sure but what you're right."

For ten minutes or more I had been puzzling over the shape of the dark spot, which was now nearly all the time in sight. Its peculiar form had filled me with a dreadful fear that it was the steamer, bottom upward, although I knew enough about nautical matters to have no good reason to suppose that this could be the case. I am not far-sighted, but when Mrs. Lecks suggested bushes, I gazed at the distant object with totally different ideas, and soon began to believe that it was not a ship, either right side up or wrong side up, but that it might be an island. This belief I proclaimed to my companions, and for some time we all worked with increased energy in the desire to get near enough to make ourselves certain in regard to this point.

"As true as I'm standin' here," said Mrs. Lecks, who, although she could not read without spectacles, had remarkably good sight at long range, "them is trees and bushes that I see before me, though they do seem to be growin' right out of the water."

"There's an island under them; you may be sure of that!" I cried. "Isn't this ever so much better than a sinking ship?"

"I'm not so sure about that," said Mrs. Aleshine. "I'm used to the ship, and as long as it didn't sink I'd prefer it. There's plenty

to eat on board of it, and good beds to sleep on, which is more than can be expected on a little bushy place like that ahead of us. But then, the ship might sink all of a suddint, beds, vittles, and all."

"Do you suppose that is the island the other boats went to?" asked Mrs. Lecks.

This question I had already asked of myself. I had been told that the island to which the captain intended to take his boats lay about thirty miles south of the point where we left the steamer. Now I knew very well that we had not come thirty miles, and had reason to believe, moreover, that the greater part of the progress we had made had been toward the north. It was not at all probable that the position of this island was unknown to our captain; and it must, therefore, have been considered by him as an unsuitable place for the landing of his passengers. There might be many reasons for this unsuitableness: the island might be totally barren and desolate; it might be the abode of unpleasant natives; and, more important than anything else, it was, in all probability, a spot where steamers never touched.

But, whatever its disadvantages, I was most wildly desirous to reach it.

"I do not believe," I said, in answer to Mrs. Lecks, "that that is the island to which the captain would have taken us; but, whatever it is, it is dry land, and we must get there as soon as we can."

"That's true," said Mrs. Aleshine, "for I'd like to have ground nearer to my feet than six miles; and if we don't find anything to eat and any place to sleep when we get there, it's no more than can be said of the place where we are now."

"You're too particular, Barb'ry Aleshine," said Mrs. Lecks, "about your comforts. If you find the ground too hard to sleep on, when you get there, you can put on your life-preserver, and go to bed in the water."

"Very good," said Mrs. Aleshine; "and if these islands are made of coral, as I've heard they are, and if they're as full of small p'intas as some coral I've got at home, you'll be glad to take a berth by me, Mrs. Lecks."

I counseled my companions to follow me as rapidly as possible, and we all pushed vigorously forward. When we had approached

near enough to the island to see what sort of place it really was, we perceived that it was a low-lying spot, apparently covered with verdure, and surrounded, as far as we could see as we rose on the swells, by a rocky reef, against which a tolerably high surf was running.

Before us we could see a continuous line of white-capped breakers, and so I led my little party to the right, hoping that we would soon see signs of an opening in the reef.

We swam and paddled, however, for a long time and still the surf rolled menacingly on the rocks before us. At last we perceived, at no great distance, a spot where there seemed to be no breakers; and when we reached it we found, to our unutterable delight, that here was smooth water flowing through a wide opening in the reef.

I swam through into an open lagoon followed closely by Mrs. Lecks and Mrs. Aleshine.

The first thing that arrested our attention was a little wharf or landing-stage, erected upon the narrow beach of the island, almost opposite to us.

"As sure as I stand here," exclaimed Mrs. Lecks, who never seemed to forget her upright position, "somebody lives in this place!"

"And it isn't a stickery coral island, either," cried Mrs. Aleshine, "for that sand's as smooth as any I ever saw."

"Whoever does live here," resumed Mrs. Lecks, "has got to take us in, whether they like it or not, and the sooner we get over there the better."

A Patented Child

THE town of Sussex, Pennsylvania, has lately been profoundly stirred by an extraordinary and romantic law-suit. The case was an entirely novel one, and no precedent bearing upon it is to be found in the common or statute law. While it is necessarily a matter of great interest to the legal profession, its romantic side cannot fail to attract the attention of persons of all ages and every kind of sex. In fact, it is destined to be one of the most celebrated cases in the annals of American jurisprudence.

Some time last winter a lady whom we will call Mrs. Smith, who kept a boarding-house in Sussex, took her little girl, aged four, with her to make a call on Mrs. Brown, her near neighbor. Mrs. Brown was busy in the kitchen, where she received her visitor with her usual cordiality. There was a large fire blazing in the stove, and while the ladies were excitedly discussing the new bonnet of the local Methodist minister's wife, the little girl incautiously sat down on the stove hearth. She was instantly convinced that the hearth was exceedingly hot, and on loudly bewailing the fact, was rescued by her mother and carried home for medical treatment. A few days later Mrs. Smith burst in great excitement into the room of a young law student, who was one of her boarders, and with tears and lamentations disclosed to him the fact that her child was indelibly branded with the legend, "Patented, 1872." These words in raised letters had happened to occupy just that part of the stove-hearth on which the child had seated herself, and being heated nearly to red heat they had

reproduced themselves on the surface of the unfortunate child.

The law student entered into the mother's sorrow with much sympathy, but after he had in some degree calmed her mind he informed her that a breach of law had been committed. "Your child," he remarked, "has never been patented, but she is marked 'Patented, 1872.' This is an infringement of the statute. You falsely represent by that brand that a child for whom no patent was issued is patented. This false representation is forgery, and subjects you to penalty made and provided for that crime."

Mrs. Smith was, as may be supposed, greatly alarmed at learning this statement, and her first impulse was to beg the young man to save her from a convict's cell. With a gravity suited to the occasion, he explained the whole law of patents. He told her that had she desired to patent the child, she should have either constructed a model of it or prepared accurate drawings, with specifications showing distinctly what parts of the child she claimed to have invented. This model or these drawings she should have forwarded to the Patent Office, and she would then have received in due time a patent—provided, of course, the child was really patentable—and would have been authorised to label it "Patented." "Unfortunately," he pursued, "it is now too late to take this course, and we must boldly claim that a patent was issued, but that the record was destroyed during the recent fire in the Patent Office."

This suggestion cheered the spirits of Mrs. Smith, but they were again dashed by the further remarks of the young man. He reminded her that the child might find it very inconvenient to be patented. "If we claim," he went on to say, "that she has been regularly patented, it follows that the ownership of the patent, including the child herself, belongs to you, and will pass at your death into the possession of your heirs. Holding the patent, they can prevent any husband taking possession of the girl by marriage, and they can sell, assign, transfer, and set over the patent right and the accompanying girl to any purchaser. If she is sold to a speculator or to a joint-stock company, she will find her position a most unpleasant one; patented or she is not. If she is not patented, you are guilty of forgery. If she is patented, she is an object of barter and sale, or in other words a chattel."

This was certainly a wretched state of things, and Mrs. Smith,

to ease her mind, began to abuse Mrs. Brown, whose stove had branded the unfortunate little girl. She loudly insisted that the whole fault rested with Mrs. Brown, and demanded to know if the latter could not be punished. The young man, who was immensely learned in the law, thereupon began a new argument. He told her that where there is a wrong there must, in the nature of things, be a remedy. "Mrs. Brown, by means of her stove, has done you a great wrong. In accordance with the maxim, *Qui facit per alium facit per se*, Mrs. Brown, and not the stove, is the party from whom you must demand redress. She has wickedly and maliciously, and at the instigation of the devil, branded your child, and thus rendered you liable for an infringement of the patent law. It is my opinion, madam, that an action for assault and an action for libel will both lie against Mrs. Brown, and 'semble' that there is also ground for having her indicted for procurement of forgery." Finally, after much further argument, the young man advised her to apply to a magistrate and procure the arrest and punishment of Mrs. Brown.

Accordingly, Mrs. Smith applied to the Mayor, who, after vainly trying to comprehend the case, and to find out what was the precise crime alleged against Mrs. Brown, compromised the matter by unofficially asking the lady to appear before him. When both the ladies were in court Mrs. Smith, prompted by the clerk, put her complaint in the shape of a charge that Mrs. Brown had branded the youthful Smith girl. The latter was then marked "Exhibit A," and formally put in evidence, and both complainant and defendant told their respective stories.

The result was that the court, in a very able and voluminous opinion, decided that nobody was guilty of anything, but that, with a view of avoiding the penalty of infringing the patent law, the mother must apply to Congress for a special act declaring the child regularly and legally patented.

If Congress finds time to attend to this important matter, little Miss Smith will be the first girl ever patented in this country, and the legal profession will watch with unflagging interest the lawsuits to which in future any infringement of the patent may lead.

Trials of an Encyclopedist

FOR the past twenty years, with occasional interruptions, I have been associated with encyclopedias either as a department editor or as an editor of the work as a whole. I began by writing for an encyclopedia that has since gone into the junk-shop things beginning with the letter A. It may have been the Jewish month Abib. More likely it was one of those two familiar animals Aardvark and Aardwolf that are always at the mouth of every encyclopedia Hades. I don't remember my maiden effort—nor does anybody else. I didn't dream that twenty years later I should be worrying lest I hadn't said the latest thing about Zulu-land in an annual volume covering the year 1909. It began with a flirtation and ended in a marriage. I am still what Dr. Johnson called the lexicographer—"a harmless drudge."

From the advertisements one would never guess that encyclopedias are made by human beings. Nor does a casual encounter with encyclopedia editors, of whom fortunately there are very few, always carry a strong conviction on that point. I am myself aware of being badly damaged by my calling. I feel drier after twenty years of it than I believe I should have felt after an equal time at some more gregarious occupation, and I fancy other people sometimes find me even drier than I feel. Twenty years

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among the barebones of all subjects, and seeing the full rotundity of none, must surely leave its mark upon one.

If it were a profession, it would be different. No one ever really means to be an encyclopedia editor. It merely happens to him. We do not hear children say they wish to be encyclopedia editors when they grow up. If we did we should probably punish them. No one ought ever to desire to be an encyclopedia editor. But though a peculiar calling, segregating and to a certain degree dehumanizing, it is not nearly so bad as might be inferred from advertisements and editorial announcements. Behind those smooth absurdities there often lurk actual men, withered perhaps, but fellow-beings nevertheless.

And so far as there is any honesty in them they will not confound their miscellaneous and unassimilated information with true knowledge. There is a good deal of nonsense talked about "varied learning," "enormous range of information," and so forth. If there really is a man who with any justice is entitled a "walking encyclopedia," I should be glad if some one would have a shot at him. It would scarcely be a case of homicide. Universality at the present stage of knowledge is a synonym for scatter-brains. Even in Diderot's time it was a doubtful compliment. No encyclopedia editor ever let so large a part of the work pass through his own head as Diderot, and certainly no encyclopedia editor ever had such a fiery head. The result was that his was not an encyclopedia in the present sense but a huge polemical pamphlet. Its attacks on the existing order were covert and indirect, because it was under governmental control; but by subterfuge, veiled irony, secret thrusts, Diderot never lost a chance to insinuate the spirit that was to overturn the Church and State. As to his universality Diderot confessed:

"I know indeed a great enough number of things, but there is hardly any one who does not know his own subject better than I. This mediocrity in all fields is the result of an unbridled curiosity and of means so straitened that I could never give myself up wholly to a single branch of learning. I have been forced all my life to follow occupations for which I am not fitted and to leave aside those to which my taste calls me."

Sainte-Beuve, to be sure, says of him that he showed so much

genius in his many-sidedness that "one is tempted to believe that he best fulfilled his destiny in thus scattering himself."

Nowadays Diderot's universality would be embarrassment. The modern editor is primarily an executive. His worth is in no wise measured by the span of his information—a narrow span at best. To know is impossible, but it is not impossible to know the men who should. Diderot's methods would ruin any modern encyclopedic enterprise. If I were a publisher I should distrust the omnivorous reader, still more a mind acquisitive of universal scraps. He would be more likely to consume the stock than organize it. He would be addicted to "drinking behind the bar."

Giants of learning are not at the present time needed for the work. For as Owen Meredith sang in lines too atrocious to be forgotten:

"A dwarf on a dead giant's shoulders sees more
Than the live giant's eyesight availed to explore."

And I venture to say that a quite commonplace person, provided only that he had an open mind and plenty of time and money, could easily devise an encyclopedia today that should surpass all its predecessors.

Diderot gave the keynote to the present encyclopedia title list and its scope. There is no such break between the French encyclopedia and its successors in these respects as divided it from those which went before. Every encyclopedia maker turns as a matter of course to the title list of his predecessors. That is the way to begin and there is no trick about it. People have often asked me how the editor knows what titles to select. They do not stop to think that the majority of subjects in any one encyclopedia are in all the other encyclopedias. The editor is forever poring over the title lists of his predecessors. He may combine them in a single list or card catalog. He may sift into it the title lists of special reference books, as dictionaries of architecture, music and mechanic arts, readers' handbooks, or titles from the indexes of special treatises, and his department editors or contributors will swell the list from still more special sources. But the bulk of the titles remains the same from decade to decade.

The exercise of a rational judgment in selection is not the thing that surprises one who has seen encyclopedias in the mak-

ing. The really amazing thing is their imitativeness and formalism. In every long-lived encyclopedia, titles are carried for a generation for no other reason than that they have been found in some preceding work. There is hardly a page of any encyclopedia, even the best, that does not include matters of less significance than something which has been left out.

In the department of biography, for instance, names of men and women are preserved merely as the result of the whim of some hack writer long since dead. If the late Leslie Stephen, in his much respected "Dictionary of National Biography," had in a sportive mood written three pages apiece on six purely imaginary British worthies—invented their names, dates, the books they wrote, the offices they held, their birthplaces and burial places—you would no doubt find them all in condensed form in the new edition of the "Britannica." At the next revision of "La Grande" they would probably appear in a concise French version, and the indefatigable "Brockhaus" and "Meyers" would surely catch them up. Posterity would be certain to encounter some of them.

I myself as a hack writer once invented a clergyman. That his title to fame might pass unchallenged, I said he was the author of the well-known hymn, "Leap, Leap, My Soul." No one cared to admit that that hymn was unfamiliar. I watched his life, carefully prepared in the encyclopedic style appropriate to clergymen, pass through the successive editorial stages. The article underwent the scrutiny of department editor, managing editor, editor-in-chief, and all the little sub-editors, and emerged unscathed; then it went into first proof, second proof, revise, and pages, and I pulled it out barely in time to save it from the plates. Otherwise he might have lived for fifty years in the hearts of his countrymen.

Hence to ask an encyclopedia editor how he knows what to put into his volume is greatly to embarrass the poor creature. He does not know what to put in. He has his precautions, his more or less elaborate system of subdivision and of checks. He can say that a certain title was taken from such and such a source, that it was assigned to the editor or contributor-in-chief of a certain department, that it was written by him or one of his collaborators, that it passed through the hands of a certain office

editor whose duty it was to read all the articles of this and certain related departments, that the managing editor saw it, the editor-in-chief saw it, the editorial proofreader read it, and changed a noun from singular to plural, and the second proofreader read it, and caught two p's that were standing upside down. But he knows that many titles find their way into his work and into every other as the result of a foolish guess, and that all conceivable safeguards can only reduce the damage done by routine thinking, credulity, somnolence, conventionality, and imitativeness.

Luckily for him, encyclopedias are seldom criticized for this useless lumber. The great body of criticism is concentrated on omissions. Encyclopedia-making is a form of journalism—ponderous and intermittent, but journalism nevertheless. In order to tell people what they wish to know it casts its dragnet far and wide. Like the newspapers and magazines it tells a great deal that nobody wishes to know.

I know nothing of the peculiar problems that beset editors of dictionaries, encyclopedias of names, or special works of reference. I am speaking only of general encyclopedias, of which five have been my portion, all straining to be "universal" and one perishing miserably in the attempt, for lack of capital. In the course of this experience, one great difficulty has been the lack of intelligent adverse criticism. To be sure I have been aided by some censorious but able reviewers, who were willing to take pains in order to inflict them, and I recall one long, envenomed article which enabled me to revise an entire department to its great advantage. But in the press generally I have been insanely praised and so discouraged from doing better. Praise to an encyclopedia reviewer is the line of least resistance. To find fault he would have to read the text.

Still the best criticism is to be found in the reviews. That which comes to the editor's desk by mail is not reassuring as to the alertness of the public mind. The greater part of it is local or trivial. A church steeple is ten feet too low. A Western railway is not long enough. Somebody's relative is omitted. Correspondents in the West seem particularly engrossed in the sheer size of everything, and the omission of any large object situated in or near a Western town angers the inhabitants exceedingly.

I have been sometimes attacked on dogmatic or historical grounds. I have been accused of a deep-seated personal hatred of Ireland and of a determined purpose always to snub Australia. To state both sides of a disputed question fairly is not so safe as it seems. It angers the extremists on each side. It angers one party even to have the views of the other mentioned. State one side and the missiles all come only from the other. State both sides and you are exposed to a raking cross-fire from each. Nor is peace maintained always by preserving a mild demeanor. If you are calm you are sometimes doubly provocative. Many people lose their tempers merely from seeing you keep yours. "You are incapable," wrote one accuser, "of an honest statement of plain facts," and then substituted a new and hitherto private history of the heavens and the earth. I have learned to regard with suspicion anyone who inquires vehemently, "What are the facts?" That outward devotion to fact seems to increase with the power of misstatement, and it is a safe rule for an editor on reading a prefatory eulogy of truth in general to brace himself for some giant falsehoods in particular. . . . There is nothing stubborn about a fact. It is a time-server and a lickspittle and whenever it meets a fool it is ready to lay down its life for him.

It will do so sometimes for a genius. "It is my stern desire," said Ruskin, in one of his delightful letters to Mr. Norton, "to get at the pure facts, and nothing less or more, which gives me whatever power I have." Accordingly our Civil War was to him "a squabble between black and red ants," and Cervantes and Dickens were merely "mischievous," and Sainte-Beuve was a hopelessly "shallow" creature, and so on through a thousand charming vagaries (sternly pursued as "facts"), till he became quite mad, still convinced that he was merely judicious.

On the whole, however, the editor has little to fear from the *odium theologicum*. We are so used to free thought that restraint is hardly imaginable. It is not easy to picture Diderot with nine censors placed over him, "one of whom must be an orthodox theologian." Once the whole work was snatched away from him and turned over to the Jesuits, and it was only because they could not make head or tail of it that he got it back again. It goes without saying that in our day the state does not bother with such matters. The only tyrannical laws now are those of demand

and supply. But it does seem rather remarkable that the people themselves are so good natured. Sects that presumably would desire proselytes or at least wish to defend themselves are in the main quite unconcerned with the statement of principles that undermine their foundations. The Catholic Church is, as it always has been, the most alert; but in this country at least it does not do much to stifle heresy at its source.

I remember years ago writing a school history intended for the use of both Catholics and Protestants. The publishers impressed on me the importance of presenting both sides fairly. Accordingly, as I was reared in the Protestant tradition, and knew very well that I could not help inclining to that point of view, I determined to seek counsel of the Jesuits. I submitted the proof to a Jesuit father, the head of a well-known American seminary, and, in a conversation with him afterward, warned him against the inevitable Protestant bias of my work. But what did he, breathing the latitudinarian air of this country, care for a Protestant bias? His suggested changes pertained, as I recall, to a few phrases about Tetzel and the Sale of Indulgences. Yet at a hundred points the book showed a spirit utterly at variance with Catholicism.

It has been much the same in editing encyclopedias. I have courted the criticism of both sides. Neither has seemed to care very much. I have taken the utmost pains to submit articles on delicate doctrinal points to both Protestants and Catholics, only to find on each side a weary and flaccid acquiescence. I have found the Jesuits more wide-awake than others. Yet they, as a matter of fact, questioned only the most obvious points—as in the case of that historical textbook. And this, though we all know that a Protestant or Roman Catholic color runs all through modern secular history in matters remote from definite doctrines. There is, of course, a Catholic and a Protestant view of the modern world. As Bishop Stubbs has said, history cannot be written later than the fourteenth century. All that follows is subject of present-day religious controversy.

MARK TWAIN
(SAMUEL LANGHORNE CLEMENS)

The Notorious Jumping Frog of Calaveras* County

(ORIGINAL VERSION)

IN COMPLIANCE with the request of a friend of mine, who wrote me from the East, I called on good-natured, garrulous old Simon Wheeler, and inquired after my friend's friend, Leonidas W. Smiley, as requested to do, and I herewith append the result. I have a lurking suspicion that *Leonidas W. Smiley* is a myth; that my friend never knew such a personage; and that he only conjectured that if I asked old Wheeler about him, it would remind him of his infamous *Jim Smiley*, and he would go to work and bore me to death with some exasperating reminiscence of him as long and as tedious as it should be useless to me. If that was the design, it succeeded.

I found Simon Wheeler dozing comfortably by the bar-room stove of the dilapidated tavern in the decayed mining camp of Angel's, and I noticed that he was fat and bald-headed, and had an expression of winning gentleness and simplicity upon his tranquil countenance. He roused up, and gave me good day. I told him that a friend of mine had commissioned me to make some inquiries about a cherished companion of his boyhood named *Leonidas W. Smiley*—*Rev. Leonidas W. Smiley*, a young minister of the Gospel, who he had heard was at one time a

* Pronounced Cal-e-va-ras.

From *Sketches New and Old*, by Mark Twain; reprinted by permission of Harper and Brothers.

resident of Angel's Camp. I added that if Mr. Wheeler could tell me anything about this Rev. Leonidas W. Smiley, I would feel under many obligations to him.

Simon Wheeler backed me into a corner and blockaded me there with his chair, and then sat down and reeled off the monotonous narrative which follows this paragraph. He never smiled, he never frowned, he never changed his voice from the gentle-flowing key to which he tuned his initial sentence, he never betrayed the slightest suspicion of enthusiasm; but all through the interminable narrative there ran a vein of impressive earnestness and sincerity, which showed me plainly that, so far from his imagining that there was anything ridiculous or funny about his story, he regarded it as a really important matter, and admired its two heroes as men of transcendent genius in *finesse*. I let him go on in his own way, and never interrupted him once.

"Rev. Leonidas W. H'm, Reverend Le—well, there was a feller here once by the name of *Jim* Smiley, in the winter of '49—or maybe it was the spring of '50—I don't recollect exactly, somehow, though what makes me think it was one or the other is because I remember the big flume warn't finished when he first come to the camp; but anyway, he was the curiosest man about always betting on anything that turned up you ever see, if he could get anybody to bet on the other side; and if he couldn't he'd change sides. Any way that suited the other man would suit *him*—any way just so's he got a bet, *he* was satisfied. But still he was lucky, uncommon lucky; he most always come out winner. He was always ready and laying for a chance; there couldn't be no solit'ry thing mentioned but that feller'd offer to bet on it, and take ary side you please, as I was just telling you. If there was a horse-race, you'd find him flush or you'd find him busted at the end of it; if there was a dog-fight, he'd bet on it; if there was a cat-fight, he'd bet on it; if there was a chicken-fight, he'd bet on it; why, if there was two birds setting on a fence, he would bet you which one would fly first; or if there was a camp-meeting, he would be there, reg'lar to bet on Parson Walker, which he judged to be the best exhorter about here, and so he was too, and a good man. If he even see a straddle-bug start to go anywheres, he would bet you how long it would take *him* to get to—to wherever he was going to, and if you took him up, he would

foller that straddle-bug to Mexico but what he would find out where he was bound for and how long he was on the road. Lots of the boys here has seen that Smiley, and can tell you about him. Why, it never made no difference to *him*—he'd bet on *any* thing—the dangdest feller. Parson Walker's wife laid very sick once, for a good while, and it seemed as if they warn't going to save her; but one morning he come in, and Smiley up and asked him how she was, and he said she was considerable better—thank the Lord for his inf'nite mercy—and coming on so smart that with the blessing of Prov'dence she'd get well yet; and Smiley, before he thought, says, 'Well, I'll resk two-and-a-half she don't anyway.'

"Thish-yer Smiley had a mare—the boys called her the fifteen-minute nag, but that was only in fun, you know, because of course she was faster than that—and he used to win money on that horse, for all she was so slow and always had the asthma, or the distemper, or the consumption, or something of that kind. They used to give her two or three hundred yards' start, and then pass her under way; but always at the fag end of the race she'd get excited and desperate like, and come cavorting and straddling up, and scattering her legs around limber, sometimes in the air, and sometimes out to one side among the fences, and kicking up m-o-r-e dust and raising m-o-r-e racket with her coughing and sneezing and blowing her nose—and *always* fetch up at the stand just about a neck ahead, as near as you could cipher it down.

"And he had a little small bull-pup, that to look at him you'd think he warn't worth a cent but to set around and look ornery and lay for a chance to steal something. But as soon as money was up on him he was a different dog; his under-jaw'd begin to stick out like the fo'castle of a steamboat, and his teeth would uncover and shine like the furnaces. And a dog might tackle him and bully-rag him, and bite him, and throw him over his shoulder two or three times, and Andrew Jackson—which was the name of the pup—Andrew Jackson would never let on but what *he* was satisfied, and hadn't expected nothing else—and the bets being doubled and doubled on the other side all the time, till the money was all up; and then all of a sudden he would grab that other dog jest by the j'int of his hind leg and freeze to it—not chaw, you understand, but only just grip and hang

on till they throwed up the sponge, if it was a year. Smiley always come out winner on that pup, till he harnessed a dog once that didn't have no hind legs, because they'd been sawed off in a circular saw, and when the thing had gone along far enough, and the money was all up, and he come to make a snatch for his pet holt, he see in a minute how he'd been imposed on, and how the other dog had him in the door, so to speak, and he 'peared surprised, and then he looked sorter discouraged-like, and didn't try no more to win the fight, and so he got shucked out bad. He give Smiley a look, as much as to say his heart was broke, and it was *his* fault, for putting up a dog that hadn't no hind legs for him to take holt of, which was his main dependence in a fight, and then he limped off a piece and laid down and died. It was a good pup, was that Andrew Jackson, and would have made a name for hisself if he'd lived, for the stuff was in him and he had genius—I know it, because he hadn't no opportunities to speak of, and it don't stand to reason that a dog could make such a fight as he could under them circumstances if he hadn't no talent. It always makes me feel sorry when I think of that last fight of his'n, and the way it turned out.

"Well, thish-yer Smiley had rat-tarriers, and chicken cocks, and tom-cats and all them kind of things, till you couldn't rest, and you couldn't fetch nothing for him to bet on but he'd match you. He ketched a frog one day, and took him home, and said he cal'lated to educate him; and so he never done nothing for three months but set in his back yard and learn that frog to jump. And you bet he *did* learn him, too. He'd give him a little punch behind, and the next minute you'd see that frog whirling in the air like a doughnut—see him turn one summer-set, or maybe a couple, if he got a good start, and come down flat-footed and all right, like a cat. He got him up so in the matter of ketching flies, and kep' him in practice so constant, that he'd nail a fly every time as fur as he could see him. Smiley said all a frog wanted was education, and he could do 'most anything—and I believe him. Why, I've seen him set Dan'l Webster down here on this floor—Dan'l Webster was the name of the frog—and sing out, 'Flies, Dan'l, flies!' and quicker'n you could wink he'd spring straight up and snake a fly off'n the counter there; and flop down

on the floor ag'in as solid as a gob of mud, and fall to scratching the side of his head with his hind foot as indifferent as if he hadn't no idea he'd been doin' any more'n any frog might do. You never see a frog so modest and straight-for'ard as he was, for all he was so gifted. And when it come to fair and square jumping on a dead level, he could get over more ground at one straddle than any animal of his breed you ever see. Jumping on a dead level was his strong suit, you understand; and when it come to that, Smiley would ante up money on him as long as he had a red. Smiley was monstrous proud of his frog, and well he might be, for fellers that had traveled and been everywhere all said he laid over any frog that ever *they* see.

"Well, Smiley kep' the beast in a little lattice box, and he used to fetch him down-town sometimes and lay for a bet. One day a feller—a stranger in the camp, he was—come acrost him with his box, and says:

" 'What might it be that you've got in the box?'

"And Smiley says, sorter indifferent-like, 'It might be a parrot, or it might be a canary, maybe, but it ain't—it's only just a frog.'

"And the feller took it, and looked at it careful, and turned it round this way and that, and says, 'H'm—so 'tis. Well, what's *he* good for?'

" 'Well,' Smiley says, easy and careless, 'he's good enough for *one* thing, I should judge—he can outjump any frog in Calaveras County.'

"The feller took the box again, and took another long, particular look, and give it back to Smiley, and says, very deliberate, 'Well,' he says, 'I don't see no p'int about that frog that's any better'n any other frog.'

" 'Maybe you don't,' Smiley says. 'Maybe you understand frogs and maybe you don't understand 'em; maybe you've had experience, and maybe you ain't only a amature, as it were. Anyways, I've got *my* opinion, and I'll resk forty dollars that he can outjump any frog in Calaveras County.'

"And the feller studied a minute, and then says, kinder sad-like, 'Well, I'm only a stranger here, and I ain't got no frog; but if I had a frog, I'd bet you.'

"And then Smiley says, 'That's all right—that's all right—if

you'll hold my box a minute, I'll go and get you a frog.' And so the feller took the box, and put up his forty dollars along with Smiley's, and set down to wait.

"So he set there a good while thinking and thinking to himself, and then he got the frog out and prized his mouth open and took a teaspoon and filled him full of quail-shot—filled him pretty near up to his chin—and set him on the floor. Smiley he went to the swamp and slopped around in the mud for a long time, and finally he ketched a frog, and fetched him in, and give him to this feller, and says:

" 'Now, if you're ready, set him alongside of Dan'l, with his fore-paws just even with Dan'l's, and I'll give the word.' Then he says, 'One—two—threc—*git!*' and him and the feller touched up the frogs from behind, and the new frog hopped off lively, but Dan'l give a heave, and hysted up his shoulders—so—like a Frenchman, but it warn't no use—he couldn't budge; he was planted as solid as a church, and he couldn't no more stir than if he was anchored out. Smiley was a good deal surprised, and he was disgusted too, but he didn't have no idea what the matter was, of course.

"The feller took the money and started away; and when he was going out at the door, he sorter jerked his thumb over his shoulder—so—at Dan'l, and says again, very deliberate, 'Well,' he says, 'I don't see no p'int about that frog that's any better'n any other frog.'

"Smiley he stood scratching his head and looking down at Dan'l a long time, and at last he says, 'I do wonder what in the nation that frog throw'd off for—I wonder if there ain't something the matter with him—he 'pears to look mighty baggy, somehow.' And he ketched Dan'l by the nap of the neck, and hefted him, and says, 'Why blame my cats if he don't weigh five pound!' and turned him upside down and he belched out a double handful of shot. And then he see how it was, and he was the maddest man—he set the frog down and took out after that feller, but he never ketched him. And——"

(Here Simon Wheeler heard his name called from the front yard, and got up to see what was wanted.) And turning to me as he moved away, he said: "Just set where you are, stranger, and rest easy—I ain't going to be gone a second."

But, by your leave, I did not think that a continuation of the history of the enterprising vagabond *Jim Smiley* would be likely to afford me much information concerning the Rev. *Leonidas W. Smiley*, and so I started away.

At the door I met the sociable Wheeler returning, and he button-holed me and recommenced:

"Well, thish-yer Smiley had a yaller one-eyed cow that didn't have no tail, only just a short stump like a bannanner, and——"

However, lacking both time and inclination, I did not wait to hear about the afflicted cow, but took my leave.

The Nice People

"THEY certainly are nice people," I assented to my wife's observation, using the colloquial phrase with a consciousness that it was anything but "nice" English, "and I'll bet that their three children are better brought up than most of——"

"Two children," corrected my wife.

"Three, he told me."

"My dear, she said there were *two*."

"He said three."

"You've simply forgotten. I'm *sure* she told me they had only two—a boy and a girl."

"Well, I didn't enter into particulars."

"No dear, and you couldn't have understood him. Two children."

"All right," I said; but I did not think it was all right. As a near-sighted man learns by enforced observation to recognise persons at a distance when the face is not visible to the normal eye, so the man with a bad memory learns, almost unconsciously, to listen carefully and report accurately. My memory is bad; but I had not had time to forget that Mr. Brewster Brede had told me that afternoon that he had three children, at present left in the care of his mother-in-law, while he and Mrs. Brede took their summer vacation.

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"Two children," repeated my wife; "and they are staying with his aunt Jenny."

"He told me with his mother-in-law," I put in. My wife looked at me with a serious expression. Men may not remember much of what they are told about children; but any man knows the difference between an aunt and a mother-in-law.

"But don't you think they're nice people?" asked my wife.

"Oh, certainly," I replied; "only they seem to be a little mixed up about their children."

"That isn't a nice thing to say," returned my wife.

I could not deny it.

* * *

And yet the next morning, when the Bredes came down and seated themselves opposite us at table, beaming and smiling in their natural, pleasant, well-bred fashion, I knew, to a social certainty, that they *were* "nice" people. He was a fine-looking fellow in his neat tennis-flannels, slim, graceful, twenty-eight or thirty years old, with a Frenchy-pointed beard. She was "nice" in all her pretty clothes, and she herself was pretty with that type of prettiness which outwears most other types—the prettiness that lies in a rounded figure, a dusky skin, plump, rosy cheeks, white teeth, and black eyes. She might have been twenty-five; you guessed that she was prettier than she was at twenty, and that she would be prettier still at forty.

And nice people were all we wanted to make us happy in Mr. Jacobus's summer boarding-house on the top of Orange Mountain. For a week we had come down to breakfast each morning, wondering why we wasted the precious days of idleness with the company gathered around the Jacobus board. What joy of human companionship was to be had out of Mrs. Tabb and Miss Hoogencamp, the two middle-aged gossips from Scranton, Pa.,—out of Mr. and Mrs. Biggle, an indurated head-bookkeeper and his prim and censorious wife,—out of old Major Halkit, a retired business man, who, having once sold a few shares on commission, wrote for circulars of every stock company that was started, and tried to induce every one to invest who would listen to him? We looked around at those dull faces, the truthful indices of mean and barren minds, and decided that we would leave that morn-

ing. Then we ate Mrs. Jacobus's biscuits, light as Aurora's cloud-lets, drank her honest coffee, inhaled the perfume of the late azaleas with which she decked her table, and decided to postpone our departure one more day. And then we wandered out to take our morning glance at what we called "our view"; and it seemed to us as if Tabb and Hoogencamp, and Halkit and the Biggles could not drive us away in a year.

I was not surprised when, after breakfast, my wife invited the Bredes to walk with us to "our view." The Hoogencamp-Biggle-Tabb-Halkit contingent never stirred off Jacobus's verandah; but we both felt that the Bredes would not profane that sacred scene. We strolled slowly across the fields, passed through the little belt of wood, and as I heard Mrs. Brede's little cry of startled rapture, I motioned to Brede to look up.

"By Jove!" he cried; "heavenly!"

We looked off from the brow of the mountain over fifteen miles of billowing green, to where, far across a far stretch of pale blue, lay a dim purple line that we knew was Staten Island. Towns and villages lay before us and under us; there were ridges and hills, uplands and lowlands, woods and plains, all massed and mingled in that great silent sea of sunlit green. For silent it was to us, standing in the silence of a high place—silent with a Sunday stillness that made us listen, without taking thought, for the sound of bells coming up from the spires that rose above the tree-tops—the tree tops that lay as far beneath us as the light clouds were above us that dropped great shadows upon our heads and faint specks of shade upon the broad sweep of land at the mountain's foot.

"And so that is *your* view?" asked Mrs. Brede, after a moment; "you are very generous to make it ours too."

Then we lay down on the grass, and Brede began to talk in a gentle voice, as if he felt the influence of the place. He had paddled a canoe, in his earlier days, he said, and he knew every river and creek in that vast stretch of landscape. He found his landmarks, and pointed out to us where the Passaic and the Hackensack flowed, invisible to us, hidden behind great ridges that in our sight were but combings of the green waves upon which we looked down, and yet on the further side of those broad ridges

and rises were scores of villages—a little world of country life, lying unseen under our eyes.

"A good deal like looking at humanity," he said; "there is such a thing as getting so far above our fellow-men that we see only one side of them."

Ah, how much better was this sort of talk than the chatter and gossip of the Tabb and the Hoogencamp—than the Major's dissertations upon his everlasting circulars! My wife and I exchanged glances.

"Now, when I went up the Matterhorn," Mr. Brede began.

"Why, dear," interrupted his wife; "I didn't know you ever went up the Matterhorn."

"It—it was five years ago," said Mr. Brede hurriedly; "I—I didn't tell you—when I was on the other side, you know—it was rather dangerous—well, as I was saying—it looked—oh, it didn't look at all like this."

A cloud floated overhead, throwing its great shadow over the field where we lay. The shadow passed over the mountain's brow, and reappeared far below, a rapidly decreasing blot; flying eastward over the golden green. My wife and I exchanged glances once more.

Somehow the shadow lingered over us all. As we went home, the Bredes went side by side along the narrow path, and my wife and I walked together.

"*Should you think,*" she asked me, "that a man would climb the Matterhorn the very first year he was married?"

"I don't know, my dear," I answered evasively; "this isn't the first year I have been married, not by a good many, and I wouldn't climb it—for a farm."

"You know what I mean?" she said.

I did.

* * *

When we reached the boarding-house, Mr. Jacobus took me aside.

"You know," he began his discourse, "my wife, she used to live in N' York!"

I didn't know; but I said, "Yes."

"She says the numbers on the streets runs criss-cross like. Thirty-four's on one side o' the street, an' thirty-five's on t'other. How's that?"

"That is the invariable rule, I believe."

"Then—I say—these here new folk that you 'n' your wife seems so mighty taken up with—d'ye know anything about 'em?"

"I know nothing about the character of your boarders, Mr. Jacobus," I replied, conscious of some irritability. "If I choose to associate with any of them——"

"Jess so—jess so!" broke in Jacobus. "I hain't nothin' to say ag'inst yer sosherbil'ty. But do ye *know* them?"

"Why, certainly not," I replied.

"Well—that was all I wuz askin' ye. Ye see, when *he* come here to take the rooms—you wasn't here then—he told my wife that he lived at number thirty-four in his street. An' yistiddy *she* told her that they lived at number thirty-five. He said he lived in an apartment-house. Now, there can't be no apartment-house on two sides of the same street, kin they?"

"What street was it?" I inquired wearily.

"Hundred'n' twenty-first street."

"Maybe," I replied, still more wearily. "That's Harlem. Nobody knows what people will do in Harlem."

I went up to my wife's room.

"Don't you think it qucer?" she asked me.

"I think I'll have a talk with that young man to-night," I said, "and see if he can give some account of himself."

"But, my dear," my wife said gravely, "*she* doesn't know whether they've had the measles or not."

"Why, Great Scott!" I exclaimed, "they must have had them when they were children."

"Please don't be stupid," said my wife. "I meant *their* children."

* * *

After dinner that night—or rather after supper, for we had dinner in the middle of the day at Jacobus's—I walked down the long verandah to ask Brede, who was placidly smoking at the other end, to accompany me on a twilight stroll. Half-way down I met Major Halkit.

"That friend of yours," he said, indicating the unconscious figure at the further end of the house, "seems to be a queer sort of a Dick. He told me that he was out of business, and just looking round for a chance to invest his capital. And I've been telling him what an everlasting big show he had to take stock in the Capitoline Trust Company—starts next month—four million capital; I told you all about it. 'Oh, well,' he says, 'let's wait and think about it.' 'Wait!' says I; 'the Capitoline Trust Company won't wait for *you*, my boy. This is letting you in on the ground floor,' says I; 'and it's now or never.' 'Oh, let it wait,' says he. I don't know what's *in-to* the man."

"I don't know how well he knows his own business, Major," I said as I started again for Brede's end of the verandah. But I was troubled none the less. The Major could not have influenced the sale of one share of stock in the Capitoline Company. But that stock was a great investment; a rare chance for a purchaser with a few thousand dollars. Perhaps it was no more remarkable that Brede should not invest than that I should not; and yet it seemed to add one circumstance more to the other suspicious circumstances.

* * *

When I went upstairs that evening, I found my wife putting her hair to bed—I don't know how I can better describe an operation familiar to every married man. I waited until the last tress was coiled up, and then I spoke.

"I've talked with Brede," I said, "and I didn't have to catechise him. He seemed to feel that some sort of explanation was looked for, and he was very out-spoken. You were right about the children—that is, I must have misunderstood him. There are only two; but the Matterhorn episode was simple enough. He didn't realise how dangerous it was until he had got so far into it that he couldn't back out; and he didn't tell her, because he'd left her here, you see; and under the circumstances——"

"Left her here!" cried my wife. "I've been sitting with her the whole afternoon, sewing, and she told me that he left her at Geneva, and came back and took her to Basle, and the baby was born there. Now I'm sure, dear, because I asked her."

"Perhaps I was mistaken when I thought he said she was

on this side of the water," I suggested with bitter, biting irony.

"You poor dear, did I abuse you?" said my wife. "But do you know Mrs. Tabb said that *she* didn't know how many lumps of sugar he took in his coffee. Now that seems queer, doesn't it?"

It did. It was a small thing; but it looked queer, very queer.

* * *

The next morning it was clear that war was declared against the Bredes. They came down to breakfast somewhat late, and as soon as they arrived the Biggles swooped up the last fragments that remained on their plates, and made a stately march out of the dining-room. Then Miss Hoogencamp arose and departed, leaving a whole fish-ball on her plate. Even as Atalanta might have dropped an apple behind her to tempt her pursuer to check his speed, so Miss Hoogencamp left that fish-ball behind her, and between her maiden self and Contamination.

We had finished our breakfast, my wife and I, before the Bredes appeared. We talked it over, and agreed that we were glad that we had not been obliged to take sides upon such insufficient testimony.

After breakfast it was the custom of the male half of the Jacobus household to go around the corner of the building and smoke their pipes and cigars, where they would not annoy the ladies. We sat under a trellis covered with a grape vine that had borne no grapes in the memory of man. This vine, however, bore leaves, and these, on that pleasant summer morning, shielded from us two persons who were in earnest conversation in the straggling, half-dead flower-garden at the side of the house.

"I don't want," we heard Mr. Jacobus say, "to enter in no man's *privacy*; but I do want to know who it may be, like, that I hev in my house. Now what I ask of *you*—and I don't want you to take it as in no ways *personal*—is, hev you your merridge-licence with you?"

"No," we heard the voice of Mr. Brede reply. "Have you yours?"

I think it was a chance shot, but it told all the same. The Major (he was a widower), and Mr. Biggle and I looked at each other; and Mr. Jacobus, on the other side of the grape-trellis,

looked at—I don't know what—and was as silent as we were.

Where is *your* marriage-licence, married reader? Do you know? Four men, not including Mr. Brede, stood or sat on one side or the other of that grape-trellis, and not one of them knew where his marriage-licence was. Each of us had had one—the Major had had three. But where were they? Where is *yours*? Tucked in your best-man's pocket; deposited in his desk, or washed to a pulp in his white waistcoat (if white waistcoats be the fashion of the hour), washed out of existence—can you tell where it is? Can you—unless you are one of those people who frame that interesting document and hang it upon their drawing-room walls?

Mr. Brede's voice arose, after an awful stillness of what seemed like five minutes, and was, probably, thirty seconds—

"Mr. Jacobus, will you make out your bill at once, and let me pay it? I shall leave by the six o'clock train. And will you also send the waggon for my trunks?"

"I hain't said I wanted to hev ye leave——" began Mr. Jacobus; but Brede cut him short.

"Bring me your bill."

"But," remonstrated Jacobus, "ef ye ain't——"

"Bring me your bill!" said Mr. Brede.

* * *

My wife and I went out for our morning's walk. But it seemed to us, when we looked at "our view," as if we could only see those invisible villages of which Brede had told us—that other side of the ridges and rises of which we catch no glimpse from lofty hills or from the heights of human self-esteem. We meant to stay out until the Bredes had taken their departure; but we returned just in time to see Pete, the Jacobus darkey, the blacker of boots, the brusher of coats, the general handy-man of the house, loading the Bredes' trunks on the Jacobus waggon.

And, as we stepped upon the verandah, down came Mrs. Brede, leaning on Mr. Brede's arm as though she were ill; and it was clear that she had been crying—there were heavy rings about her pretty black eyes.

My wife took a step towards her.

"Look at that dress, dear," she whispered; "she never thought

anything like this was going to happen when she put *that* on."

It was a pretty, delicate, dainty dress, a graceful, narrow-striped affair. Her hat was trimmed with a narrow-striped silk of the same colour—maroon and white; and in her hand she held a parasol that matched her dress.

"She's had a new dress on twice a day," said my wife; "but that's the prettiest yet. Oh, somehow—I'm *awfully* sorry they're going!"

But going they were. They moved towards the steps. Mrs. Brede looked towards my wife, and my wife moved towards Mrs. Brede. But the ostracised woman, as though she felt the deep humiliation of her position, turned sharply away, and opened her parasol to shield her eyes from the sun. A shower of rice—a half-pound shower of rice—fell down over her pretty hat and her pretty dress, and fell in a splattering circle on the floor, outlining her skirts, and there it lay in a broad, uneven band, and bright in the morning sun.

Mrs. Brede was in my wife's arms, sobbing as if her young heart would break.

"Oh, you poor, dear, silly children!" my wife cried, as Mrs. Brede sobbed on her shoulder; "why *didn't* you tell us?"

"W-w-we didn't want to be t-t-taken for a b-b-b-b-bridal couple," sobbed Mrs. Brede; "and we d-d-didn't *dream* what awful lies we'd have to tell, and all the aw-aw-ful mixed-up mess of it. Oh, dear, dear, dear!"

"Petel!" commanded Mr. Jacobus, "put back them trunks. These folks stays here's long's they wants ter. Mr. Brede"—he held out a large, hard hand—"I'd orter 've known better," he said; and my last doubt of Mr. Brede vanished as he shook that grimy hand in manly fashion.

The two women were walking off toward "our view," each with an arm about the other's waist—touched by a sudden sisterhood of sympathy.

"Gentlemen," said Mr. Brede, addressing Jacobus, Biggle, the Major, and me, "there is a hostelry down the street where they sell honest New Jersey beer. I recognize the obligations of the situation."

We five men filed down the street, and the two women went toward the pleasant slope where the sunlight gilded the forehead of the great hill. On Mr. Jacobus's verandah lay a spattered circle of shining grains of rice. Two of Mr. Jacobus's pigeons flew down and picked up the shining grains, making grateful noises far down in their throats.

P A R T T H R E E

The Modern Period

NOTE BY THE EDITOR

IN WHAT now seems like the idyllic first years of the century the World Court at the Hague was established and the world seemed to have become too civilized, at last, for war. Internationalism was more than popular; it was the fashion. Until the shocked summer of 1914, when what happened seemed incredible even while it was happening, international peace and fraternity appeared to be just around the corner.

What we got, instead, was the internationalism of war, and the first of a series of disappointments greater, perhaps, than any generation of man has had to face. The miseries and losses of the war had been acceptable as long as the outcome seemed worth the costs. That outcome, so often and so solemnly declared by the official statesmen, was a free and united world. It was awaited on every continent, and among all classes. But it never arrived.

The disappointments went deep into the life of our time. For years our literature was, directly or indirectly, an enraged or stoical expression of our disappointments. The generation that suffered them was called the "lost generation," though few have left a clearer mark in literary history. And its characteristic expression was disillusion.

This disillusion led to a general revaluation of our spiritual possessions—at a general markdown. It was the "debunking" era when all reputations were discounted, when saints were searched and the keys to ladies' apartments were found in their pockets; when, on the other hand, the great lovers were carefully examined and discovered to be impotents; when Napoleon was demoted back to a corporal and given lessons in the art of war.

The mood, in its varied developments, continued right up to the second World War. There was the interlude of the early de-

pression 'thirties when the swing to the Left focussed the anger and the scorn on capitalist failure. But the Left drive spent itself, or was overwhelmed; and through its ex-exponents, it added itself to the targets of the general disillusionment.

Yet the disillusion of the between-wars generation would not have been so sweeping, or rather its expression would not have been so predominantly urban, had not the way for both mood and manner been prepared by basic changes in American life. This came, chiefly, from the vast industrial development stimulated by the first World War. In that war, the United States, as it was again to become in the 'forties, became the world's armorer. And while the other industrial nations were absorbed in producing for the battlefields, the United States also became the workshop for the world. This enormous industrial development, along with the accompanying changes in America's banking position, vastly accelerated the urbanization of American life. We rapidly became a nation of city dwellers and acquired all the characteristics of an urban civilization.

But the first World War and its aftermath in Europe had an additional effect upon us. We became not only urban but cosmopolitan. In the first place, many of our "lost generation" writers spent their salad days in Europe. Then there arrived among us the refugee swarm of aristocrats with their glitter and suave sophistication. Then prosperous America drew a pleasanter immigration of writers, painters and artists from impoverished Europe. Finally, fascism robbed Central and Baltic Europe of its greatest treasure—its free minds, a gift to America of inestimable riches.

Fascism's unwanted brought us many cultivated graces which we have not yet begun to estimate. To American humor they added a continental flavor, with, in one case, a direct physical embodiment; they gave us one of America's best contemporary humorists, Ludwig Bemelmans.

One effect of the urbanization of American life has been the virtual disappearance of the country from our humor. The country, as it is now presented by our humorists, has become transformed into tributaries of the towns, into the suburb, and the "vacation acres," and the artists' and writers' "colonies" where the successful turn for relaxation to their \$20,000 "country

shacks." Still more significantly, the farm countryside has been transformed into the almost dehumanized sharecropping countries pictured by Faulkner and Caldwell. A drastic social change has found writers equal to its drastic truths.

Our contemporary American humor then is sophisticated and cosmopolitan. But disillusionment has not led it to misanthropy. Our humor is not without social conscience or a heart, as the pieces by Heywood Broun and Ruth McKenney show. It has arrived at a maturity of understanding that deserves the title of satire. And it has also drawn deeply, consciously or unconsciously, from the new self-knowledge brought to us by the refugee doctors of Vienna. As one student of psychoanalysis puts it: "When you examine their work you have to conclude that humorists like Thurber and Dorothy Parker are practically psychoanalysts."

Fate Keeps On Happening

April 11th:

Well Dorothy and I are really on the ship sailing to Europe as anyone could tell by looking at the ocean. I always love the ocean. I mean I always love a ship and I really love the *Majestic* because you would not know it was a ship because it is just like being at the Ritz, and the steward says the ocean is not so obnoxious this month as it generally is. So Mr. Eisman is going to meet us next month in Paris because he has to be there on business. I mean he always says that there is really no place to see the latest styles in buttons like Paris.

So Dorothy is out taking a walk up and down the deck with a gentleman she met on the steps, but I am not going to waste my time going around with gentlemen because if I did nothing but go around I would not finish my diary or read good books which I am always reading to improve my mind. But Dorothy really does not care about her mind and I always scold her because she does nothing but waste her time by going around with gentlemen who do not have anything, when Eddie Goldmark of the Goldmark Films is really quite wealthy and can make a girl delightful presents. But she does nothing but waste her time and yesterday, which was really the day before we sailed, she would not go to luncheon with Mr. Goldmark but she went to luncheon

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to meet a gentleman called Mr. Mencken from Baltimore who really only prints a green magazine which has not even got any pictures in it. But Mr. Eisman is always saying that every girl does not want to get ahead and get educated like me.

So Mr. Eisman and Lulu come down to the boat to see me off and Lulu cried quite a lot. I mean I really believe she could not care any more for me if she was light and not colored. Lulu has had a very sad life because when she was quite young a pullman porter fell madly in love with her. So she believed him and he lured her away from her home to Ashtabula and deceived her there. So she finally found out that she had been deceived and she really was broken hearted and when she tried to go back home she found out that it was too late because her best girl friend, who she had always trusted, had stolen her husband and he would not take Lulu back. So I have always said to her she could always work for me and she is going to take care of the apartment until I get back, because I would not sublet the apartment because Dorothy sublet her apartment when she went to Europe last year and the gentleman who sublet the apartment allowed girls to pay calls on him who were not nice.

Mr. Eisman has literally filled our room with flowers and the steward has had quite a hard time to find enough vases to put them into. I mean the steward said he knew as soon as he saw Dorothy and I that he would have quite a heavy run on vases. And of course Mr. Eisman has sent me quite a lot of good books as he always does, because he always knows that good books are always welcome. So he has sent me quite a large book of Etiquette as he says there is quite a lot of Etiquette in England and London and it would be a good thing for a girl to learn. So I am going to take it on the deck after luncheon and read it, because I would often like to know what a girl ought to do when a gentleman she has just met, says something to her in a taxi. Of course I always become quite vexed but I always believe in giving a gentleman another chance.

So now the steward tells me it is luncheon time, so I will go upstairs as the gentleman Dorothy met on the steps has invited us to luncheon in the Ritz, which is a special dining room on the ship where you can spend quite a lot of money because they really give away the food in the other dining room.

April 12th:

I am going to stay in bed this morning as I am quite upset as I saw a gentleman who quite upset me. I am not really sure it was the gentleman, as I saw him at quite a distance in the bar, but if it really is the gentleman it shows that when a girl has a lot of fate in her life it is sure to keep on happening. So when I thought I saw this gentleman I was with Dorothy and Major Falcon, who is the gentleman Dorothy met on the steps, and Major Falcon noticed that I became upset, so he wanted me to tell him what was the matter, but it is really so terrible that I would not want to tell anyone. So I said good night to Major Falcon and I left him with Dorothy and I went down to our room and did nothing but cry and send the steward for some champagne to cheer me up. I mean champagne always makes me feel philosophical because it makes me realize that when a girl's life is as full of fate as mine seems to be, there is nothing else to do about it. So this morning the steward brought me my coffee and quite a large pitcher of ice water so I will stay in bed and not have any more champagne until luncheon time.

Dorothy never has any fate in her life and she does nothing but waste her time and I really wonder if I did right to bring her with me and not Lulu. I mean she really gives gentlemen a bad impression as she talks quite a lot of slang. Because when I went up yesterday to meet her and Major Falcon for luncheon, I overheard her say to Major Falcon that she really liked to become intoxicated once in a "dirty" while. Only she did not say intoxicated, but she really said a slang word that means intoxicated and I am always having to tell her that "dirty" is a slang word and she really should not say "dirty."

Major Falcon is really quite a delightful gentleman for an Englishman. I mean he really spends quite a lot of money and we had quite a delightful luncheon and dinner in the Ritz until I thought I saw the gentleman who upset me and I am so upset I think I will get dressed and go up on the deck and see if it really is the one I think it is. I mean there is nothing else for me to do as I have finished writing in my diary for today and I have decided not to read the book of Etiquette as I glanced through it and it does not seem to have anything in it that I would care

to know because it wastes quite a lot of time telling you what to call a Lord and all the Lords I have met have told me what to call them and it is generally some quite cute name like Coocoo whose real name is really Lord Cooksleigh. So I will not waste my time on such a book. But I wish I did not feel so upset about the gentleman I think I saw.

April 13th:

It really is the gentleman I thought I saw. I mean when I found out it was the gentleman my heart really stopped. Because it all brought back things that anybody does not like to remember, no matter who they are. So yesterday when I went up on the deck to see if I could see the gentleman and see if it really was him, I met quite a delightful gentleman who I met once at a party called Mr. Ginzberg. Only his name is not Mr. Ginzberg any more because a gentleman in London called Mr. Battenburg, who is some relation to some king, changed his name to Mr. Mountbatten which Mr. Ginzberg says really means the same thing after all. So Mr. Ginzberg changed his name to Mr. Mountginz which he really thinks is more aristocratic. So we walked around the deck and we met the gentleman face to face and I really saw it was him and he really saw it was me. I mean his face became so red it was almost a picture. So I was so upset I said good-bye to Mr. Mountginz and I started to rush right down to my room and cry. But when I was going down the steps, I bumped right into Major Falcon who noticed that I was upset. So Major Falcon made me go to the Ritz and have some champagne and tell him all about it.

So then I told Major Falcon about the time in Arkansas when Papa sent me to Little Rock to study how to become a stenographer. I mean Papa and I had quite a little quarrel because Papa did not like a gentleman who used to pay calls on me in the park and Papa thought it would do me good to get away for awhile. So I was in the business colllege in Little Rock for about a week when a gentleman called Mr. Jennings paid a call on the business colllege because he wanted to have a new stenographer. So he looked over all we colllege girls and he picked me out. So he told our teacher that he would help me finish my course in his office because he was only a lawyer and I really did not have to

know so much. So Mr. Jennings helped me quite a lot and I stayed in his office about a year when I found out that he was not the kind of a gentleman that a young girl is safe with. I mean one evening when I went to pay a call on him at his apartment, I found a girl there who really was famous all over Little Rock for not being nice. So when I found out that girls like that paid calls on Mr. Jennings I had quite a bad case of hysterics and my mind was really a blank and when I came out of it, it seems that I had a revolver in my hand and it seems that the revolver had shot Mr. Jennings.

So this gentleman on the boat was really the District Attorney who was at the trial and he really was quite harsh at the trial and he called me names that I would not even put in my diary. Because everyone at the trial except the District Attorney was really lovely to me and all the gentlemen in the jury all cried when my lawyer pointed at me and told them that they practically all had had either a mother or a sister. So the jury was only out three minutes and then they came back and acquitted me and they were all so lovely that I really had to kiss all of them and when I kissed the judge he had tears in his eyes and he took me right home to his sister. I mean it was when Mr. Jennings became shot that I got the idea to go into the cinema, so Judge Hibbard got me a ticket to Hollywood. So it was Judge Hibbard who really gave me my name because he did not like the name I had because he said a girl ought to have a name that ought to express her personality. So he said my name ought to be Lorelei which is the name of a girl who became famous for sitting on a rock in Germany. So I was in Hollywood in the cinema when I met Mr. Eisman and he said that a girl with my brains ought not to be in the cinema but she ought to be educated, so he took me out of the cinema so he could educate me.

So Major Falcon was really quite interested in everything I talked about, because he said it was quite a coincidence because this District Attorney, who is called Mr. Bartlett, is now working for the government of America and he is on his way to a place called Vienna on some business for Uncle Sam that is quite a great secret and Mr. Falcon would like very much to know what the secret is, because the Government in London sent him to America especially to find out what it was. Only of course Mr.

Bartlett does not know who Major Falcon is, because it is such a great secret, but Major Falcon can tell me, because he knows who he can trust. So Major Falcon says he thinks a girl like I ought to forgive and forget what Mr. Bartlett called me and he wants to bring us together and he says he thinks Mr. Bartlett would talk to me quite a lot when he really gets to know me and I forgive him for that time in Little Rock. Because it would be quite romantic for Mr. Bartlett and I to become friendly, and gentlemen who work for Uncle Sam generally like to become romantic with girls. So he is going to bring us together on the deck after dinner tonight and I am going to forgive him and talk with him quite a lot, because why should a girl hold a grudge against a gentleman who had to do it. So Major Falcon brought me quite a large bottle of perfume and a quite cute imitation of quite a large size dog in the little shop which is on board the boat. I mean Major Falcon really knows how to cheer a girl up quite a lot and so tonight I am going to make it all up with Mr. Bartlett.

April 14th:

Well Mr. Bartlett and I made it all up last night and we are going to be the best of friends and talk quite a lot. So when I went down to my room quite late Major Falcon came down to see if I and Mr. Bartlett were really going to be friends because he said a girl with brains like I ought to have lots to talk about with a gentleman with brains like Mr. Bartlett who knows all of Uncle Sam's secrets.

So I told Major Falcon how Mr. Bartlett thinks that he and I seem to be like a play, because all the time he was calling me all those names in Little Rock he really thought I was. So when he found out that I turned out not to be, he said he always thought that I only used my brains against gentlemen and really had quite a cold heart. But now he thinks I ought to write a play about how he called me all those names in Little Rock and then, after seven years, we became friendly.

So I told Major Falcon that I told Mr. Bartlett I would like to write the play but I really did not have time as it takes quite a lot of time to write my diary and read good books. So Mr. Bartlett did not know that I read books which is quite a co-

instance because he reads them to. So he is going to bring me a book of philosophy this afternoon called "Smile, Smile, Smile" which all the brainy senators in Washington are reading which cheers you up quite a lot.

So I told Major Falcon that having a friendship with Mr. Bartlett was really quite enervating because Mr. Bartlett does not drink anything and the less anybody says about his dancing the better. But he did ask me to dine at his table, which is not in the Ritz and I told him I could not, but Major Falcon told me I ought to, but I told Major Falcon that there was a limit to almost everything. So I am going to stay in my room until luncheon and I am going to luncheon in the Ritz with Mr. Mountginz who really knows how to treat a girl.

Dorothy is up on the deck wasting quite a lot of time with a gentleman who is only a tennis champion. So I am going to ring for the steward and have some champagne which is quite good for a person on a boat. The steward is really quite a nice boy and he has had quite a sad life and he likes to tell me all about himself. I mean it seems that he was arrested in Flatbush because he promised a gentleman that he would bring him some very very good scotch and they mistook him for a bootlegger. So it seems they put him in a prison and they put him in a cell with two other gentlemen who were very, very famous burglars. I mean they really had their pictures in all the newspapers and everybody was talking about them. So my steward, whose real name is Fred, was very very proud to be in the same cell with such famous burglars. So when they asked him what he was in for, he did not like to tell them that he was only a bootlegger, so he told them that he set fire to a house and burned up quite a large family in Oklahoma. So everything would have gone alright except that the police had put a dictaphone in the cell and used it all against him and he could not get out until they had investigated all the fires in Oklahoma. So I always think that it is much more educational to talk to a boy like Fred who has been through a lot and really suffered than it is to talk to a gentleman like Mr. Bartlett. But I will have to talk to Mr. Bartlett all afternoon as Major Falcon has made an appointment for me to spend the whole afternoon with him.

April 15th:

Last night there was quite a masquerade ball on the ship which was really all for the sake of charity because most of the sailors seem to have orphans which they get from going on the ocean when the sea is very rough. So they took up quite a collection and Mr. Bartlett made quite a long speech in favor of orphans especially when their parents are sailors. Mr. Bartlett really likes to make speeches quite a lot. I mean he even likes to make speeches when he is all alone with a girl when they are walking up and down a deck. But the masquerade ball was quite cute and one gentleman really looked almost like an imitation of Mr. Chaplin. So Dorothy and I really did not want to go to the ball but Mr. Bartlett bought us two scarfs at the little store which is on the ship so we tied them around our hips and everyone said we made quite a cute Carmen. So Mr. Bartlett and Major Falcon and the tennis champion were the Judges. So Dorothy and I won the prizes. I mean I really hope I do not get any more large size imitations of a dog as I have three now and I do not see why the Captain does not ask Mr. Cartier to have a jewelry store on the ship as it is really not much fun to go shopping on a ship with gentlemen, and buy nothing but imitations of dogs.

So after we won the prizes I had an engagement to go up on the top of the deck with Mr. Bartlett as it seems he likes to look at the moonlight quite a lot. So I told him to go up and wait for me and I would be up later as I promised a dance to Mr. Mountginz. So he asked me how long I would be dancing till, but I told him to wait up there and he would find out. So Mr. Mountginz and I had quite a delightful dance and champagne until Major Falcon found us. Because he was looking for me and he said I really should not keep Mr. Bartlett waiting. So I went up on the deck and Mr. Bartlett was up there waiting for me and it seems that he really is madly in love with me because he did not sleep a wink since we became friendly. Because he never thought that I really had brains but now that he knows it, it seems that he has been looking for a girl like me for years, and he said that really the place for me when he got back home was Washington d. c. where he lives. So I told him I thought a thing

like that was nearly always the result of fate. So he wanted me to get off the ship tomorrow at France and take the same trip that he is taking to Vienna as it seems that Vienna is in France and if you go on to England you go to far. But I told him that I could not because I thought that if he was really madly in love with me he would take a trip to London instead. But he told me that he had serious business in Vienna that was a very, very great secret. But I told him I did not believe it was business but that it really was some girl, because what business could be so important? So he said it was business for the United States government at Washington and he could not tell anybody what it was. So then we looked at the moonlight quite a lot. So I told him I would go to Vienna if I really knew it was business and not some girl, because I could not see how business could be so important. So then he told me all about it. So it seems that Uncle Sam wants some new aeroplanes that everybody else seems to want, especially England, and Uncle Sam has quite a clever way to get them which is to long to put in my diary. So we sat up and saw the sun rise and I became quite stiff and told him I would have to go down to my room because, after all, the ship lands at France today and I said if I got off the boat at France to go to Vienna with him I would have to pack up.

So I went down to my room and went to bed. So then Dorothy came in and she was up on the deck with the tennis champion but she did not notice the sun rise as she really does not love nature but always wastes her time and ruins her clothes even though I always tell her not to drink champagne out of a bottle on the deck of the ship as it lurches quite a lot. So I am going to have luncheon in my room and I will send a note to Mr. Bartlett to tell him I will not be able to get off the boat at France to go to Vienna with him as I have quite a headache, but I will see him sometime somewhere else. So Major Falcon is going to come down at 12 and I have got to thinking over what Mr. Bartlett called me at Little Rock and I am quite upset. I mean a gentleman never pays for those things but a girl always pays. So I think I will tell Major Falcon all about the aeroplane business as he really wants to know. And, after all I do not think Mr. Bartlett is a gentleman to call me all those names in Little Rock even if it was seven years ago. I mean Major Falcon is always a gentle-

man and he really wants to do quite a lot for us in London. Because he knows the Prince of Wales and he thinks that Dorothy and I would like the Prince of Wales once we had really got to meet him. So I am going to stay in my room until Mr. Bartlett gets off the ship at France, because I really do not seem to care if I never see Mr. Bartlett again.

So tomorrow we will be at England bright and early. And I really feel quite thrilled because Mr. Eisman sent me a cable this morning, as he does every morning, and he says to take advantage of everybody we meet as traveling is the highest form of education. I mean Mr. Eisman is always right and Major Falcon knows all the sights in London so it really looks like Dorothy and I would have quite a delightful time in London.

The Fable of the Straight and Narrow Path Leading to the Refreshment Counter

ONCE there was a Getter named Ichabod Roxworthy. His Father had married into the famous Clamm Family of New England, and one of his Ancestors was that godly Character, Jonas Wolf, of York State, who traded a Demijohn of Squirrel Whisky and two Looking-Glasses for all that portion of the New World lying west of Albany.

Mr. Roxworthy had it in every Pocket because he was a Good Man.

He knew that some day or other he would Shuffle and two Minutes after his milk-white Soul had winged skyward he would be checking in at the Pearly Gates and Saint Peter would be showing him a Diagram and urging him to take a Room with a good view of the Lower Regions, so he would be sure to Enjoy himself.

Even those who had been stung by Ichabod could not deny that he was booked for the Pearly Gates. They merely hoped that all of the Pearls would be fastened from the inside by Rivets.

One Monday morning Mr. Roxworthy arose feeling sure that he would be prospered during the Week to come if he carried the right Tools.

The Sabbath had been dedicated to Meditation, Prayer, Dark Clothes, and Overeating.

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The Motor-Car had remained cold in the Garage.

No soul-destroying Golf for Mr. Roxworthy on the day of Rest.

Instead of desecrating the long Sabbath P.M. he preferred to sit back in some quiet spot and frame up a few air-tight Cinches.

As he came out of the Zone of Sanctimony into the cold Realities of Monday morning, he was working full-time under the Bonnet and getting ready to slip over some Hot Ones.

He was worried as to the Future of a Manufacturing Venture in which he held a hatful of Stock.

This stock never had declared a Divvy, and the whole Venture was commonly regarded as a Quince.

Only the watchful Deacon and a few Insiders knew of a cheapened Process and the certain Prospect of Juicy Contracts which would convert the Fliv into a Baby Doll.

So he was worried.

He saw a lot of Soft Collateral finding its way to those who might waste it in Sinful Practices.

That is why we catch him on Monday, at close quarters with a Lawyer who could walk in fresh Snow without leaving any Tracks.

Mr. Roxworthy made a candid Statement of Facts, after assuring himself that no one was lurking on the Fire-Escape.

The Property might have a Future if taken over by Responsible Parties of known Integrity.

The Lawyer said everything would be quite Legal. A little roundabout and more or less in the Twilight, but Legal.

They would send a Goat into Court and ask for the appointment of a Receiver.

Then a few carefully selected Pall-Bearers would go out and buy up Stock held by the poor Flatheads likely to go Cold in the Feet when they heard of the Receivership.

When the controlling Interest had been garnered by a capable Minority, the Receiver would jump gracefully out of the Window and the real Business Guys would go ahead and collect the Pickings.

It was all just as regular as melting the Lid off of a Child's Tin Bank.

Mr. Roxworthy felt intensely relieved to know that he could put it across without snagging into the Revised Statutes.

He and the Limb of the Law went out to Lunch at a Club

where some of the Lockers were still doing Business.

The Counselor suggested a little Shake-Up with a Foundation of Gin.

Mr. Roxworthy recoiled as if from a Blow.

"How dare you?" he demanded, putting on the Tremolo. "How dare you offer me Rum? I want you to know that not one Drop of Anything ever passed these here Lips. Would I be the loved and honoured Citizen I am today if I had licked up Cock-tails? Take my Advice and flee from the Tempter."

Tuesday was all to the Happy for the He Seraph.

The kindly Providence that notes the fall of a Sparrow saw to it that Ichabod more than made his Expenses on this same Tuesday.

A certain Boyhood Friend, who was slowly sinking into a morass of Mortgages, still held on to a piece of Corner Property just on the border of the Business District.

Mr. Roxworthy sometimes purchased reliable Advance Tips from needy Persons employed by Architects and Real-Estate Promoters. He understood it was not against the law.

On Tuesday he learned that the Transfers had been made and the Plans approved for the construction of a huge Department Store right across the Street from the property owned by his Boyhood Friend.

At the same time he had an awful Hunch that Boyhood Friend was not wise to the projected Improvements.

So he dropped in, casual-like, to see his dear old Side Kick and Playmate of other Days.

A tale of Grief was waiting for him. It involved a Sick Wife and Premiums due on Insurance Policies, and the longing to send Daughter to College.

Well, when Mr. Roxworthy found his Old Friend lying face downward in the Gravel, he sure did a Magnanimous Thing.

He took over the Corner Property at about 80 per cent. of the recent Market Value and about 30 per cent. of what it would Fetch after being taken into the Retail Shopping District.

Of course the Friend was grateful. He offered Mr. Roxworthy a Cigar.

"I don't use Tobacco in no Form," said Mr. Roxworthy, severely. "It is a vile Habit. I'd say that any Man using the Weed could hardly be called a Moral Man."

He walked up street with the Option next his heart and a great Peace seemed to flood his Soul.

He had copped 40,000 Louies, just like picking Fruit, and, at the same time, he had rebuked a Wrong-doer.

That was his Idea of a Perfect Day—to kick Satan in the shins and then bring home the Bacon.

Wednesday was a fairly trying day for the Benefactor.

No sooner did he get through with a meeting of the Committee to investigate Charges against the Minister than he had to sit down with his Book-keeper and figure out a Declaration of Income for the Treasury Department.

When it came to coughing up Taxes, Ich was what you might term a Conscientious Objector.

He never had any way of knowing, when he turned his hard-earned Spon over to the Government, that the Coin would be wisely expended by someone whose Private Life was Pure.

It seemed to him that the surest way to corrupt Public Officials was to give them too much Money to handle. So he tried to keep them Honest.

Poor Mr. Roxworthy! The Book-keeper would ask about this Item and that Item, referring to Bunches of Grapes that the True Believer had plucked in the Vineyard.

Mr. Roxworthy was in doubt regarding the Propriety of including these Side Issues and Pick-Ups in any sworn Statement of his regular Income.

He studied the various sub-headings and didn't see just where they could be worked in, and, rather than make a Mistake and cause Confusion at the Collector's Office, he left them out altogether.

He knew, away down in his Gizzard, that the Declaration he attested before the Notary did not include all of the scattered Receipts during a busy year, but he had the Satisfaction of feeling that, even if he held out a little Kale, he more than made up the Shortage by setting a Good Example to all other Citizens Day by Day.

Mr. Roxworthy was so relieved over his successful negotiation of the Income-Tax Hurdle that he took his Daughter to a Stereopticon Lecture on Egypt.

She timidly suggested going to a Play which had been fumi-gated for the Family Trade, but he explained to her that the

Playhouse was an Evil Influence, even when it masqueraded as a Teacher of Correct Behaviour.

The Lights and Music and False Excitement Helped to distract attention from the Solemn Realities of Life and substitute Fivolities for humble Virtues.

Furthermore, while waiting his Turn at the Barber Shop, he had read some terrible Stories about Actresses in "The Police Gazette."

Thursday called for some lively Stepping.

The Directors of an Interurban Electric were to meet in the Afternoon and place a Contract for much new Equipment.

A majority of the Directors were Papier Mache and subject to the Domination of the more forceful Characters of the Roxworthy Type.

Before casting his Vote, Mr. Roxworthy wanted to know all of the Facts in the Case, so he happened into the Office of the President of the Concern that was angling for the Contract.

He asked many pertinent Questions.

He (Roxworthy) was friendly enough, but they had a few Stubborn Ones on the Board who would be mighty hard to handle.

Mr. Roxworthy said he would feel a good deal freer to put up a Battle if he knew that the Company receiving the Contract was under conservative Management.

Here was an Opening too wide to be missed. The President of the Company tumbled.

"Suppose," said he, "that we drop a few Shares of Stock into your Pocket when you are not looking and then put you on the Board? You would have supervisory Power and could protect your other Company."

Oh, the look that Mr. Roxworthy shot at the One who spoke the Above!

"How dare you?" he demanded. "Evidently you are not acquainted with my reputation for Probity. Do you realize that you are offering me a Bribe? If I am to acquire any Stock in your Corporation so as to protect my Associates in the Interurban, it will be by Purchase. Everything Regular and Aboveboard—that's my Motto."

He took quite a hunk of Stock at Par. The Market Price was 280, but it was agreed by all Present that Mr. Roxworthy was entitled to come in on the same Terms as the original Incorporators.

After the Contract was let, the 280 Stock was 300, which shows that Values are enhanced by Legitimate Methods rather than by Manipulation.

Friday was devoted to what you might call Inside Stuff.

It happens that in almost any State indicated on the Map, Corporate Interests are constantly harassed and menaced by Legislators who are trying to pay off Mortgages on their Homes.

Oppressive and confiscatory Bills are introduced by Hungry Highbinders.

These are the customary Preludes to a Shakedown.

The organized Interests which find themselves threatened are supposed to charge up a Jack-Pot to Operating Expenses and then select a Trusty to go and feed the Animals.

With much reluctance, Mr. Roxworthy had made a Date with a slippery Go-Between for Friday Afternoon.

Although Mr. Roxworthy had always kept his Skirts clean and would have refused to dicker with Corrupt Influences, he naturally had his doubts when the Hired Man brought in an Expense Account of \$8,000 for Cigarettes.

If there was any Crooked Work going on, Mr. Roxworthy preferred not to suspect, so he wore Blinders.

The useful Bird who could handle the Boys had been summoned by Mr. Roxworthy because there was pending a Measure which would put an awful Crimp in certain Public Utilities.

The Fixer had a couple of Shortcomings, but Mr. Roxworthy was inclined to drape them with the mantle of Charity, because anyone who protects an Investor against Legislative Oppression cannot be wholly Bad.

It appeared that the Menagerie was in a restless Mood, with much Howling and showing of Fangs.

According to the Middleman, it would require quite a bale of Mazuma to finance the Campaign of Education and counter-act the misleading Propaganda.

Mr. Roxworthy, speaking for his incorruptible Associates, said they were willing to Dig, in order to protect Property Interests

against vicious Socialistic Tendencies, but they would suggest that no Improper use be made of the Currency after it had been tied into Bundles.

The Gum-Shoe Specialist scouted the Suggestion. He said that practically all of the Funds would be paid as Fees to Country Lawyers for drafting Substitute Measures from which Objectionable Features would be eliminated.

He confided the Information that a Party Leader with a heavy Drag happened to be in Town, and he suggested that Mr. Roxworthy could make a ten-strike with the Tall-Grass Statesman by showing him a Swell Time.

"He votes Dry on Roll-Call, but is a Bust-Over when he sees the Electric Signs," said Wise Ike. "Take him to a Cabaray where the Cuties hop on one Foot, and you'll have your Ticket on him for Life."

"I am sorry that you have misjudged me," said Mr. Roxworthy, coldly. "I have heard tell of these gilded Dumps where the perfumed Sirens pivot on the Toe and otherwise Cavort, but I look the other way when I pass one. In all the Years since I began to hide a Surplus, I never once got tangled in the Ribbons of a Jezebel. If all Men were like me, the Head Waiters and Almost-Castles would be in the Poorhouse."

"I get you," was the reply. "The rough Party is off."

"Not necessarily," said Mr. Roxworthy, brightening up. "I know a Fellow Director of marvellous Capacity and extreme Moral Turpitude. I will call him up and O. K. the Outlay, and he will take whatever Steps are necessary to win our Law-Making Friend over to the Side of Justice and Fair Play."

Having thus maintained his miraculous Average of batting 1,000 in the Purity League, Mr. Roxworthy went home to his Chipped Beef and Tea, with his Conscience clear and a Heart like that of a Little Child.

It just seemed on Saturday that every one was trying to annoy the Kind Gentleman.

In one of the Plants he helped to operate, the murmurs of Discontent had crescendoed to a Mob Scene.

The Employees wanted in on the Velvet.

Mr. Roxworthy found at his office a glowering bunch of Unionites with a square-jawed Walking Delegate at their head.

Oh, how Mr. Roxworthy disliked Walking Delegates! He preferred gentle Characters that would take the Halter.

The men left an ugly Ultimatum, and then a Delegation of Social Workers came in to plead for the Women and Children employed at the Works, claiming that they were underpaid and not properly safeguarded as to Moral Welfare and Physical Comfort.

It was the Old Story—a lot of Outsiders trying to filch the Profits of Honest Enterprise.

Mr. Roxworthy sent for the Superintendent and ask how about it.

“Well, the Men are strongly organized,” was the Reply. “If they walk out, it’s ‘Good-Night, Myrtle,’ for us. Give the Men their Raise. We can afford to do it under the new Boost in Prices, provided we don’t have to increase the Pay-Roll in the cheaper Departments. The Women and Kids have no Organization and can be handled.”

Some quick work with the Pencil convinced the Captain of Industry that he could compromise and still pull down a lovely Return.

His Better Nature asserted itself and he gave his faithful Men Employees a nice Raise and wondered if it would get into the Papers.

It is Saturday Evening.

Sitting before the Grate, with an Apple at his Elbow, and reviewing a week of Combat with the Philistines and those who live in Outer Darkness, who could blame Mr. Roxworthy if he seemed to feel a Halo resting, light as a Nimbus, upon his leathery Brow?

Or who will deny the Statement, made to the Bible Class on the subsequent Morning, that those who obey the Precepts seem to find a special Guidance to the delectable Pastures, where Milk is ever on Tap and Honey may be had by those who know how to get it?

MORAL: Restrictive Regulations are made to jack up the Wicked and not to inconvenience the Righteous.

A Boston Terrier

I WOULD like to hand down a dissenting opinion in the case of the Camel ad which shows a Boston terrier relaxing. I can string along with cigarette manufacturers to a certain degree, but when it comes to the temperament and habits of terriers, I shall stand my ground.

The ad says: "A dog's nervous system resembles our own." I don't think a dog's nervous system resembles my own in the least. A dog's nervous system is in a class by itself. If it resembles anything at all, it resembles the New York Edison Company's power plant. This is particularly true of Boston terriers, and if the Camel people don't know that, they have never been around dogs.

The ad says: "But when a dog's nerves tire, he obeys his instincts—he relaxes." This, I admit, is true. But I should like to call attention to the fact that it sometimes takes days, even weeks, before a dog's nerves tire. In the case of terriers it can run into months.

I knew a Boston terrier once (he is now dead and, so far as I know, relaxed) whose nerves stayed keyed up from the twenty-fifth of one June to the sixth of the following July, without one minute's peace for anybody in the family. He was an old dog and he was blind in one eye, but his infirmities caused no diminution in his nervous power. During the period of which

From *One Man's Meat*, by E. B. White; this selection copyright 1939 by the author. Reprinted by permission of Harper and Brothers.

I speak, the famous period of his greatest excitement, he not only raised a type of general hell which startled even his closest friends and observers, but he gave a mighty clever excuse. He said it was love.

"I'm in love," he would scream. (He could scream just like a hurt child.) "I'm in love and I'm going *crazy*."

Day and night it was all the same. I tried everything to soothe him. I tried darkness, cold water dashed in the face, the lash, long quiet talks, warm milk administered internally, threats, promises, and close confinement in remote locations. At last, after about a week of it, I went down the road and had a chat with the lady who owned the object of our terrier's affection. It was she who finally cleared up the situation.

"Oh," she said, wearily, "if it's that bad, let him out."

I hadn't thought of anything as simple as that myself, but I am a creature of infinite reserve. As a matter of record, it turned out to be not so simple—the terrier got run over by a motor car one night while returning from his amorous adventures, suffering a complete paralysis of the hip but no assuagement of the nervous system; and the little Scotty bitch returned to Washington, D. C., and a Caesarian.

I am not through with the Camel people yet. Love is not the only thing that can keep a dog's nerves in a state of perpetual jangle. A dog, more than any other creature, it seems to me, gets interested in one subject, theme, or object, in life, and pursues it with a fixity of purpose which would be inspiring to Man if it weren't so troublesome. One dog gets absorbed in one thing, another dog in another. When I was a boy there was a smooth-haired fox terrier (in those days nobody ever heard of a fox terrier that *wasn't* smooth-haired) who became interested, rather late in life, in a certain stone. The stone was about the size of an egg. As far as I could see, it was like a million other stones—but to him it was the Stone Supreme.

He kept it with him day and night, slept with it, ate with it, played with it, analyzed it, took it on little trips (you would often see him three blocks from home, trotting along on some shady errand, his stone safe in his jaws). He used to lie by the hour on the porch of his house, chewing the stone with an expression half tender, half petulant. When he slept he merely enjoyed

a muscular suspension: his nerves were still up and around, adjusting the bed clothes, tossing and turning.

He permitted people to throw the stone for him and people would. But if the stone lodged somewhere he couldn't get to he raised such an uproar that it was absolutely necessary that the stone be returned, for the public peace. His absorption was so great it brought wrinkles to his face, and he grew old before his time. I think he used to worry that somebody was going to pitch the stone into a lake or a bog, where it would be irretrievable. He wore off every tooth in his jaw, wore them right down to the gums, and they became mere brown vestigial bumps. His breath was awful (he panted night and day) and his eyes were alight with an unearthly zeal. He died in a fight with another dog. I have always suspected it was because he tried to hold the stone in his mouth all through the battle. The Camel people will just have to take my word for it: that dog was a living denial of the whole theory of relaxation. He was a paragon of nervous tension, from the moment he first laid eyes on his slimy little stone till the hour of his death.

The advertisement speaks of the way humans "prod" themselves to endeavor—so that they keep on and on working long after they should quit. The inference is that a dog never does that. But I have a dog right now that can prod himself harder and drive himself longer than any human I ever saw. This animal is a dachshund, and I shall spare you the long dull inanities of his innumerable obsessions. His particular study (or mania) at the moment is a black-and-white kitten that my wife gave me for Christmas, thinking that what my life needed was something else that could move quickly from one place in the room to another. The dachshund began his research on Christmas eve when the kitten arrived "secretly" in the cellar, and now, five months later, is taking his Ph.D. still working late at night on it, every night. If he could write a book about that cat, it would make *Middletown* look like the work of a backward child.

I'll be glad to have the Camel people study this animal in one of his relaxed moods, but they will have to bring their own seismograph. Even curled up cozily in a chair, dreaming of his cat, he quivers like an aspen.

The Gazelle's Ears

THE whole thing began just as Dr. Bulch and the rest of us were bringing our little Bachelor Dinner to an end by sailing paper boats in the finger bowls. It seems the waiter discovered that the stuffed gazelle over the mantel was missing both its ears.

Inasmuch as we had been the only persons in the room that evening, the waiter even went so far as to suggest that *we* had the ears, and summoned the manager. Dr. Bulch tried in vain to insist that we had not seen the ears; the manager had other ideas on the subject. The argument proceeded as follows:

Dr. Bulch pointed out that the gazelle looked a great deal better off without ears anyway, that the ears had been much too big for it in the first place.

The manager said that it didn't make any difference if it had been all ears and no gazelle, he wanted them back and he wanted them back quick.

Dr. Bulch said that as a matter of fact a gazelle didn't have ears at all; he had hunted them himself all up and down the Himalayas and he guessed he ought to know.

The manager said triumphantly, then why had he just said the ears were too big for it?

Dr. Bulch replied that of course he had said the ears were too big for it, in fact that was the reason why gazelles didn't have ears, and he hoped that the manager wouldn't want to see a

From *The Gazelle's Ears*, by Corey Ford; copyright 1926 by Doubleday and Company, Inc.

poor little defenseless animal go around with ears three or four sizes too large for it; that if the manager was as cruel a man as to want to see a little animal tortured that way, he must be the kind of man who used to pull the wings off blue-bottle flies just to tease them.

The manager replied hotly that he had never pulled the wings off blue-bottle flies, he never could catch them, and he didn't see exactly what blue-bottle flies had to do with gazelles; and how in the devil could a gazelle hear if it didn't have ears?

Dr. Bulch said that they heard by fins in the side of their head, and anyway they were stone-deaf, and couldn't hear a sound, and that was probably how this poor animal here had been caught in the first place, and the manager ought to be ashamed of himself for taking advantage of a defenseless gazelle that way; and besides the darned animal wasn't a gazelle anyway, it was a goat.

The manager declared craftily that all right, then, it was a goat, and goats have ears, haven't they, and so where were the ears?

Dr. Bulch replied that like as not the manager had pulled the ears off the goat himself to make it look like a gazelle.

The manager swore that he had never pulled the ears off himself, no, and not off the gazelle either and don't get so smart, and hurry up, now, he would like the ears and cut the fooling.

Dr. Bulch said that if the manager hadn't pulled off the ears, then the blamed goat didn't even *look* like a gazelle, and it seemed to him it was going pretty far to ask for gazelle's ears from a goat that didn't look like a gazelle and didn't have any ears anyway; and as far as he was concerned, the manager could go climb up on the mantelpiece and stand up on his hind legs and bray, if he wanted an animal with long ears so bad; and what was more, he was never coming into *that* place again, and it was no use for the manager to apologize, it was his own fault.

The odd part of it all was, when Dr. Bulch woke up the next morning, what should he find in his pocket but two long furry ears; which only goes to prove that gazelles *do* have ears after all.

Little Gentleman

THE midsummer sun was stinging hot outside the little barber-shop next to the corner drug store and Penrod, undergoing a toilette preliminary to his very slowly approaching twelfth birthday, was adhesive enough to retain upon his face much hair as it fell from the shears. There is a mystery here: the tonsorial processes are not unagreeable to manhood; in truth, they are soothing; but the hairs detached from a boy's head get into his eyes, his ears, his nose, his mouth, and down his neck, and he does everywhere itch excruciatingly. Wherefore he blinks, winks, weeps, twitches, condenses his countenance, and squirms; and perchance the barber's scissors clip more than intended—belike an outlying flange of ear.

"Um-muh—ow!" said Penrod, this thing having happened.

"D' I touch y'up a little?" inquired the barber, smiling falsely.

"Ooh—uh!" The boy in the chair offered inarticulate protest, as the wound was rubbed with alum.

"*That* don't hurt!" said the barber. "You *will* get it, though, if you don't sit stiller," he continued, nipping in the bud any attempt on the part of his patient to think that he already had "it."

"Pfuff!" said Penrod, meaning no disrespect, but endeavoring to dislodge a temporary mustache from his lip.

"You ought to see how still that little Georgie Bassett sits,"

From *Penrod, His Complete Story*, by Booth Tarkington; copyright 1913, 1941 by the author. Reprinted by permission of Brandt and Brandt.

the barber went on, reprovingly. "I hear everybody says he's the best boy in town."

"Phuff! *Phirr!*" There was a touch of intentional contempt in this.

"I haven't heard nobody around the neighborhood makin' no such remarks," added the barber, "about nobody of the name of Penrod Schofield."

"Well," said Penrod, clearing his mouth after a struggle, "who wants 'em to? Ouch!"

"I hear they call Georgie Bassett the 'little gentleman,'" ventured the barber, provocatively, meeting with instant success.

"They better not call *me* that," returned Penrod truculently. "I'd like to hear anybody try. Just once, that's all! I bet they'd never try it ag—*Ouch!*"

"Why? What'd you do to 'em?"

"It's all right what I'd *do*! I bet they wouldn't want to call me that again long as they lived!"

"What'd you do if it was a little girl? You wouldn't hit her, would you?"

"Well, I'd— Ouch!"

"You wouldn't hit a little girl, would you?" the barber persisted, gathering into his powerful fingers a mop of hair from the top of Penrod's head and pulling that suffering head into an unnatural position. "Doesn't the Bible say it ain't never right to hit the weak sex?"

"Ow! Say, look out!"

"So you'd go and punch a pore, weak, little girl, would you?" said the barber, reprovingly.

"Well, who said I'd hit her?" demanded the chivalrous Penrod. "I bet I'd fix her though, all right. She'd scel!"

"You wouldn't call her names, would you?"

"No, I wouldn't! What hurt is it to call anybody names?"

"Is that so!" exclaimed the barber. "Then you was intending what I heard you hollering at Fisher's grocery delivery wagon driver fer a favor, the other day when I was goin' by your house, was you? I reckon I better tell him, because he says to me *afterwerds* if he ever lays eyes on you when you ain't in your own yard, he's goin' to do a whole lot o' things you ain't goin' to like! Yessir, that's what he says to *me*!"

"He better catch me first, I guess, before he talks so much."

"Well," resumed the barber, "that ain't sayin' what you'd do if a young lady ever walked up and called you a little gentleman. I want to hear what you'd do to her. I guess I know, though—come to think of it."

"What?" demanded Penrod.

"You'd sick that pore ole dog of yours on her cat if she had one I expect," guessed the barber derisively.

"No, I would not!"

"Well, what *would* you do?"

"I'd do enough. Don't worry about that!"

"Well, suppose it was a boy, then: what'd you do if a boy came up to you and says, 'Hello, little gentleman?'"

"He'd be lucky," said Penrod, with a sinister frown, "if he got home alive."

"Suppose it was a boy twice your size?"

"Just let him try," said Penrod ominously. "You just let him try. He'd never see daylight again; that's all!"

The barber dug ten active fingers into the helpless scalp before him and did his best to displace it, while the anguished Penrod, becoming instantly a seething crucible of emotion, misdirected his natural resentment into maddened brooding upon what he would do to a boy "twice his size" who should dare to call him "little gentleman." The barber shook him as his father had never shaken him; the barber buffeted him, rocked him frantically to and fro; the barber seemed to be trying to wring his neck; and Penrod saw himself in staggering zigzag pictures, destroying large, screaming, fragmentary boys who had insulted him.

The torture stopped suddenly; and clenched, weeping eyes began to see again, while the barber applied cooling lotions which made Penrod smell like a colored housemaid's ideal.

"Now what," asked the barber, combing the reeking locks gently, "what would it make you so mad fer, to have somebody call you a little gentleman? It's a kind of compliment, as it were, you might say. What would you want to hit anybody fer *that* fer?"

To the mind of Penrod, this question was without meaning or reasonableness. It was within neither his power nor his desire to analyze the process by which the phrase had become offen-

sive to him, and was now rapidly assuming the proportions of an outrage. He knew only that his gorge rose at the thought of it.

"You just let 'em try it!" he said threateningly, as he slid down from the chair. And as he went out of the door, after further conversation on the same subject, he called back those warning words once more: "Just let 'em try it! Just once—that's all I ask 'em to. They'll find out what they *get*!"

The barber chuckled. Then a fly lit on the barber's nose and he slapped at it, and the slap missed the fly but did not miss the nose. The barber was irritated. At this moment his birdlike eye gleamed a gleam as it fell upon customers approaching: the prettiest little girl in the world, leading by the hand her baby brother, Mitchy-Mitch, coming to have Mitchy-Mitch's hair clipped, against the heat.

It was a hot day and idle, with little to feed the mind—and the barber was a mischievous man with an irritated nose. He did his worst.

Meanwhile, the brooding Penrod pursued his homeward way; no great distance, but long enough for several one-sided conflicts with malign insulters made of thin air. "You better *not* call me that!" he muttered. "You just try it, and you'll get what other people got when *they* tried it. You better not ack fresh with *me*! Oh, you *will*, will you?" He delivered a vicious kick full upon the shins of an iron fence-post, which suffered little, though Penrod instantly regretted his indiscretion. "Oof!" he grunted, hopping; and went on after bestowing a look of awful hostility upon the fence-post. "I guess you'll know better next time," he said, in parting, to this antagonist. "You just let me catch you around here again and I'll——" His voice sank to inarticulate but ominous murmurings. He was in a dangerous mood.

Nearing home, however, his belligerent spirit was diverted to happier interests by the discovery that some workmen had left a caldron of tar in the cross-street, close by his father's stable. He tested it, but found it inedible. Also, as a substitute for professional chewing-gum it was unsatisfactory, being insufficiently boiled down and too thin, though of a pleasant, lukewarm temperature. But it had an excess of one quality—it was sticky. It was the stickiest tar Penrod had ever used for any purposes

whatsoever, and nothing upon which he wiped his hands served to rid them of it; neither his polka-dotted shirt waist nor his knickerbockers; neither the fence, nor even Duke, who came unthinkingly wagging out to greet him, and retired wiser.

Nevertheless, tar is tar. Much can be done with it, no matter what its condition; so Penrod lingered by the caldron, though from a neighboring yard could be heard the voices of comrades including that of Sam Williams. On the ground about the caldron were scattered chips and sticks and bits of wood to the number of a great multitude. Penrod mixed quantities of this refuse into the tar, and interested himself in seeing how much of it he could keep moving in slow swirls upon the ebon surface.

Other surprises were arranged for the absent workmen. The caldron was almost full, and the surface of the tar near the rim. Penrod endeavored to ascertain how many pebbles and brickbats, dropped in, would cause an overflow. Laboring heartily to this end, he had almost accomplished it, when he received the suggestion for an experiment on a much larger scale. Embedded at the corner of a grass-plot across the street was a whitewashed stone, the size of a small watermelon and serving no purpose whatever save the questionable one of decoration. It was easily pried up with a stick; though getting it to the caldron tested the full strength of the ardent laborer. Instructed to perform such a task, he would have sincerely maintained its impossibility; but now, as it was unbidden, and promised rather destructive results, he set about it with unconquerable energy, feeling certain that he would be rewarded with a mighty splash. Perspiring, grunting vehemently, his back aching and all muscles strained, he progressed in short stages until the big stone lay at the base of the caldron. He rested a moment, panting, then lifted the stone, and was bending his shoulders for the heave that would lift it over the rim, when a sweet, taunting voice, close behind him, startled him cruelly.

"How do you do, *little gentleman!*"

Penrod squawked, dropped the stone, and shouted, "Shut up, you dern fool!" purely from instinct, even before his about-face made him aware who had so spitefully addressed him.

It was Marjorie Jones. Always dainty, and prettily dressed, she was in speckless and starchy white today, and a refreshing picture

she made, with the new-shorn and powerfully scented Mitchy-Mitch clinging to her hand. They had stolen up behind the toiler, and now stood laughing together in sweet merriment. Since the passing of Penrod's Rupe Collins period he had experienced some severe qualms at the recollection of his last meeting with Marjorie and his Apache behavior; in truth, his heart instantly became as wax at sight of her, and he would have offered her fair speech; but, alas! in Marjorie's wonderful eyes there shone a consciousness of new powers of his undoing, and she denied him opportunity.

"Oh, oh!" she cried, mocking his pained outcry. "What a way for a *little gentleman* to talk! Little gentlemen don't say wicked——"

"Marjorie!" Penrod, enraged and dismayed, felt himself stung beyond all endurance. Insult from her was bitterer to endure than from any other. "Don't you call me that again!"

"Why not, *little gentleman*?"

He stamped his foot. "You better stop!"

Marjorie sent into his furious face her lovely, spiteful laughter.

"Little gentleman, little gentleman, little gentleman!" she said deliberately. "How's the little gentleman this afternoon? Hello, little gentleman!"

Penrod, quite beside himself, danced eccentrically. "Dry up!" he howled. "Dry up, dry up, dry up, dry up!"

Mitchy-Mitch shouted with delight and applied a finger to the side of the caldron—a finger immediately snatched away and wiped upon a handkerchief by his fastidious sister.

"'Tittle gellamun!" said Mitchy-Mitch.

"You better look out!" Penrod whirled upon this small offender with grim satisfaction. Here was at least something male that could without dishonor be held responsible. "You say that again, and I'll give you the worst——"

"You will *not*!" snapped Marjorie, instantly vitriolic. "He'll say just whatever he wants to, and he'll say it just as *much* as he wants to. Say it again, Mitchy-Mitch!"

"'Tittle gellamun!" said Mitchy-Mitch promptly.

"Ow-yah!" Penrod's tone-production was becoming affected by his mental condition. "You say that again, and I'll——"

"Go on, Mitchy-Mitch," cried Marjorie. "He can't do a thing."

He don't *dare*! Say it some more, Mitchy-Mitch—say it a whole lot!"

Mitchy-Mitch, his small, fat face shining with confidence in his immunity, complied.

"'Ittle gellamun!' he squeaked malevolently. "'Ittle gellamun! 'Ittle gellamun! 'Ittle gellamun!'"

The desperate Penrod bent over the whitewashed rock, lifted it, and then—outdoing Porthos, John Ridd, and Ursus in one miraculous burst of strength—heaved it into the air.

Marjorie screamed.

But it was too late. The big stone descended into the precise midst of the caldron and Penrod got his mighty splash. It was far, far beyond his expectations.

Spontaneously there were grand and awful effects—volcanic spectacles of nightmare and eruption. A black sheet of eccentric shape rose out of the caldron and descended upon the three children, who had no time to evade it.

After it fell, Mitchy-Mitch, who stood nearest the caldron, was the thickest, though there was enough for all. Br'er Rabbit would have fled from any of them.

When Marjorie and Mitchy-Mitch got their breath, they used it vocally; and seldom have more penetrating sounds issued from human throats. Coincidentally, Marjorie, quite berserk, laid hands upon the largest stick within reach and fell upon Penrod with blind fury. He had the presence of mind to flee, and they went round and round the caldron, while Mitchy-Mitch feebly endeavored to follow—his appearance, in this pursuit, being pathetically like that of a bug fished out of an ink-well, alive but discouraged.

Attracted by the riot, Samuel Williams made his appearance, vaulting a fence, and was immediately followed by Maurice Levy and Georgie Bassett. They stared incredulously at the extraordinary spectacle before them.

"Little GEN-TIL-MUN!" shrieked Marjorie, with a wild stroke that landed full upon Penrod's tarry cap.

"Oooch!" bleated Penrod.

"It's Penrod!" shouted Sam Williams, recognizing him by the voice. For an instant he had been in some doubt.

"Penrod Schofield!" exclaimed Georgie Bassett. "What does this mean?" That was Georgie's style, and had helped to win him his title.

Marjorie leaned, panting, upon her stick. "I cucalled—uh—him—oh!" she sobbed—"I called him a lul-little—oh—gentleman! And oh—lul-look!—oh! lul-look at my du-dress! Lul-look at Mu-mitchy—oh—Mitch—oh!"

Unexpectedly, she smote again—with results—and then, seizing the indistinguishable hand of Mitchy-Mitch, she ran wailing homeward down the street.

"'Little gentleman?'" said Georgie Bassett, with some evidences of disturbed complacency. "Why that's what they call *me*!"

"Yes, and you *are* one, too!" shouted the maddened Penrod. "But you better not let anybody call *me* that! I've stood enough around here for one day, and you can't run over *me*, Georgie Bassett. Just you put that in your gizzard and smoke it!"

"Anybody has a perfect right," said Georgie, with dignity, "to call a person a little gentleman. There's lots of names nobody ought to call, but this one's a *nice*——"

"You better look out!"

Unavenged bruises were distributed all over Penrod, both upon his body and upon his spirit. Driven by subtle forces, he had dipped his hands in catastrophe and disaster: it was not for Georgie Bassett to beard him. Penrod was about to run amuck.

"I haven't called you a little gentleman, yet," said Georgie. "I only said it. Anybody's got a right to *say* it."

"Not around *me*! You just try it again and——"

"I shall say it," returned Georgie, "all I please. Anybody in this town has a right to *say* 'little gentleman'——"

Bellowing insanely, Penrod plunged his right hand into the caldron, rushed upon Georgie and made awful work of his hair and features.

Alas, it was but the beginning! Sam Williams and Maurice Levy screamed with delight, and, simultaneously infected, danced about the struggling pair, shouting frantically:

"Little gentleman! Little gentleman! Sick him, Georgie! Sick him, little gentleman! Little gentleman! Little gentleman!"

The infuriated outlaw turned upon them with blows and more tar, which gave Georgie Bassett his opportunity and later seriously

impaired the purity of his fame. Feeling himself hopelessly tarred, he dipped both hands repeatedly into the caldron and applied his gatherings to Penrod. It was bringing coals to Newcastle, but it helped to assuage the just wrath of Georgie.

The four boys gave a fine imitation of the Laocoön group complicated by an extra figure—frantic splutterings and chokings, strange cries and stranger words issued from this tangle; hands dipped lavishly into the inexhaustible reservoir of tar, with more and more picturesque results. The caldron had been elevated upon bricks and was not perfectly balanced; and under a heavy impact of the struggling group it lurched and went partly over, pouring forth a Stygian tide which formed a deep pool in the gutter.

It was the fate of Master Roderick Bitts, that exclusive and immaculate person, to make his appearance upon the chaotic scene at this juncture. All in the cool of a white "sailor suit," he turned aside from the path of duty—which led straight to the house of a maiden aunt—and paused to hop with joy upon the sidewalk. A repeated epithet continuously half panted, half squawked, somewhere in the nest of gladiators, caught his ear, and he took it up excitedly, not knowing why.

"Little gentleman!" shouted Roderick, jumping up and down in childish glee. "Little gentleman! Little gentleman! Lit——"

A frightful figure tore itself free from the group, encircled this innocent bystander with a black arm, and hurled him headlong. Full length and flat on his face went Roderick into the Stygian pool. The frightful figure was Penrod. Instantly, the pack flung themselves upon him again, and, carrying them with him, he went over upon Roderick, who from that instant was as active a belligerent as any there.

Thus began the Great Tar Fight, the origin of which proved, afterward, so difficult for parents to trace, owing to the opposing accounts of the combatants. Marjorie said Penrod began it; Penrod said Mitchy-Mitch began it; Sam Williams said Georgie Bassett began it; Georgie and Maurice Levy said Penrod began it; Roderick Bitts, who had not recognized his first assailant, said Sam Williams began it.

Nobody thought of accusing the barber. But the barber did not begin it; it was the fly on the barber's nose that began it—

though, of course, something else began the fly. Somehow, we never manage to hang the real offender.

The end came only with the arrival of Penrod's mother, who had been having a painful conversation by telephone with Mrs. Jones, the mother of Marjorie, and came forth to seek an errant son. It is a mystery how she was able to pick out her own, for by the time she got there his voice was too hoarse to be recognizable.

Mr. Schofield's version of things was that Penrod was insane. "He's a stark, raving lunatic!" declared the father, descending to the library from a before-dinner interview with the outlaw, that evening. "I'd send him to military school, but I don't believe they'd take him. Do you know *why* he says all that awfulness happened?"

"When Margaret and I were trying to scrub him," responded Mrs. Schofield wearily, "he said 'everybody' had been calling him names."

"'Names!' " snorted her husband. "'Little gentleman!' *That's* the vile epithet they called him! And because of it he wrecks the peace of six homes!"

"*Sh!* Yes; he told us about it," said Mrs. Schofield, moaning. "He told us several hundred times, I should guess, though I didn't count. He's got it fixed in his head, and we couldn't get it out. All we could do was to put him in the closet. He'd have gone out again after those boys if we hadn't. I don't know *what* to make of him!"

"He's a mystery to *me!*" said her husband. "And he refuses to explain why he objects to being called 'little gentleman.' Says he'd do the same thing—and worse—if anybody dared to call him that again. He said if the President of the United States called him that he'd try to whip him. How long did you have him locked up in the closet?"

"*Sh!*" said Mrs. Schofield warningly. "About two hours; but I don't think it softened his spirit at all, because when I took him to the barber's to get his hair clipped again, on account of the tar in it Sammy Williams and Maurice Levy were there for the same reason, and they just *whispered* 'little gentleman,' so low you could hardly hear them—and Penrod began fighting with

them right before me, and it was really all the barber and I could do to drag him away from them. The barber was very kind about it, but Penrod——"

"I tell you he's a lunatic!" Mr. Schofield would have said the same thing of a Frenchman infuriated by the epithet "camel." The philosophy of insult needs expounding.

"*Sh!*" said Mrs. Schofield. "It does seem a kind of frenzy."

"Why on earth should any sane person mind being called——"

"*Sh!*" said Mrs. Schofield. "It's beyond *me!*"

"What are you *sh-ing* me for?" demanded Mr. Schofield explosively.

"*Sh!*" said Mrs. Schofield. "It's Mr. Kinoslign, the new rector of Saint Joseph's."

"Where?"

"*Sh!* On the front porch with Margaret; he's going to stay for dinner. I do hope——"

"Bachelor, isn't he?"

"Yes."

"*Our* old minister was speaking of him the other day," said Mr. Schofield, "and he didn't seem so terribly impressed."

"*Sh!* Yes; about thirty, and of course *so* superior to most of Margaret's friends—boys home from college. She thinks she likes young Robert Williams, I know—but he laughs so much! Of course there isn't any comparison. Mr. Kinoslign talks so intellectually; it's a good thing for Margaret to hear that kind of thing, for a change—and, of course, he's very spiritual. He seems very much interested in her." She paused to muse. "I think Margaret likes him; he's so different, too. It's the third time he's dropped in this week, and I——"

"Well," said Mr. Schofield grimly, "if you and Margaret want him to come again, you'd better not let him see Penrod."

"But he's asked to see him; he seems interested in meeting all the family. And Penrod nearly always behaves fairly well at table." She paused, and then put to her husband a question referring to his interview with Penrod upstairs. "Did you—did you—do it?"

"No," he answered gloomily. "No, I didn't, but——" He was interrupted by a violent crash of china and metal in the kitchen, a

shriek from Della, and the outrageous voice of Penrod. The well-informed Della, ill-inspired to set up for a wit, had ventured to address the scion of the house roguishly as "little gentleman," and Penrod, by means of the rapid elevation of his right foot, had removed from her supporting hands a laden tray. Both parents started for the kitchen, Mr. Schofield completing his interrupted sentence on the way.

"But I will, now!"

The rite thus promised was hastily but accurately performed in that apartment most distant from the front porch; and, twenty minutes later, Penrod descended to dinner. The Rev. Mr. Kinosling had asked for the pleasure of meeting him, and it had been decided that the only course possible was to cover up the scandal for the present, and to offer an undisturbed and smiling family surface to the gaze of the visitor.

Scorched but not bowed, the smoldering Penrod was led forward for the social formulæ simultaneously with the somewhat bleak departure of Robert Williams, who took his guitar with him, this time, and went in forlorn unconsciousness of the powerful forces already set in secret motion to be his allies.

The punishment just undergone had but made the haughty and unyielding soul of Penrod more stalwart in revolt; he was unconquered. Every time the one intolerable insult had been offered him, his resentment had become the hotter, his vengeance the more instant and furious. And, still burning with outrage, but upheld by the conviction of right, he was determined to continue to the last drop of his blood the defense of his honor, whenever it should be assailed, no matter how mighty or august the powers that attacked it. In all ways, he was a very sore boy.

During the brief ceremony of presentation, his usually inscrutable countenance wore an expression interpreted by his father as one of insane obstinacy, while Mrs. Schofield found it an incentive to inward prayer. The fine graciousness of Mr. Kinosling, however, was unimpaired by the glare of virulent suspicion given him by this little brother: Mr. Kinosling mistook it for a natural curiosity concerning one who might possibly become, in time, a member of the family. He patted Penrod upon the head, which was, for many reasons, in no condition to

be patted with any pleasure to the patter. Penrod felt himself in the presence of a new enemy.

"How do you do, my little lad," said Mr. Kinosling. "I trust we shall become fast friends."

To the ear of his little lad, it seemed he said, "A trost we shall bickhome fawst frainds." Mr. Kinosling's pronunciation was, in fact, slightly precious; and the little lad, simply mistaking it for some cryptic form of mockery of himself, assumed a manner and expression which argued so ill for the proposed friendship that Mrs. Schofield hastily interposed the suggestion of dinner, and the small procession went in to the dining-room.

"It has been a delicious day," said Mr. Kinosling, presently; "warm but balmy." With a benevolent smile he addressed Penrod, who sat opposite him. "I suppose, little gentleman, you have been indulging in the usual outdoor sports of vacation?"

Penrod laid down his fork and glared, open-mouthed at Mr. Kinosling.

"You'll have another slice of breast of the chicken?" Mr. Schofield inquired loudly and quickly.

"A lovely day!" exclaimed Margaret, with equal promptitude and emphasis. "Lovely, oh, lovely! Lovely!"

"Beautiful, beautiful, beautiful!" said Mrs. Schofield, and after a glance at Penrod which confirmed her impression that he intended to say something, she continued, "Yes, beautiful, beautiful, beautiful, beautiful, beautiful, beautiful, beautiful!"

Penrod closed his mouth and sank back in his chair—and his relatives took breath.

Mr. Kinosling looked pleased. This responsive family, with its ready enthusiasm, made the kind of audience he liked. He passed a delicate white hand gracefully over his tall, pale forehead, and smiled indulgently.

"Youth relaxes in summer," he said. "Boyhood is the age of relaxation; one is playful, light, free, unfettered. One runs and leaps and enjoys one's self with one's companions. It is good for the little lads to play with their friends; they jostle, push, and wrestle, and simulate little, happy struggles with one another in harmless conflict. The young muscles are toughening. It is good. Boyish chivalry develops, enlarges, expands. The young learn quickly, intuitively, spontaneously. They perceive the obligations

of *noblesse oblige*. They begin to comprehend the necessity of caste and its requirements. They learn what birth means—ah,—that is, they learn what it means to be well born. They learn courtesy in their games; they learn politeness, consideration for one another in their pastimes, amusements, lighter occupations. I make it my pleasure to join them often, for I sympathize with them in all their wholesome joys as well as in their little bothers and perplexities. I understand them, you see; and let me tell you it is no easy matter to understand the little lads and lassies.” He sent to each listener his beaming glance, and, permitting it to come to rest upon Penrod, inquired:

“And what do you say to that, little gentleman?”

Mr. Schofield uttered a stentorian cough. “More? You’d better have some more chicken! More! Do!”

“More chicken!” urged Margaret simultaneously. “Do please! Please! More! Do! More!”

“Beautiful, beautiful,” began Mrs. Schofield. “Beautiful, beautiful, beautiful, beautiful——”

It is not known in what light Mr. Kinosling viewed the expression of Penrod’s face. Perhaps he mistook it for awe; perhaps he received no impression at all of its extraordinary quality. He was a rather self-engrossed young man, just then engaged in a double occupation, for he not only talked, but supplied from his own consciousness a critical though favorable auditor as well, which of course kept him quite busy. Besides, it is oftener than is suspected the case that extremely peculiar expressions upon the countenances of boys are entirely overlooked, and suggest nothing to the minds of people staring straight at them. Certainly Penrod’s expression—which, to the perception of his family, was perfectly horrible—caused not the faintest perturbation in the breast of Mr. Kinosling.

Mr. Kinosling waived the chicken, and continued to talk. “Yes, I think I may claim to understand boys,” he said, smiling thoughtfully. “One has been a boy one’s self. Ah, it is not all playtime! I hope our young scholar here does not overwork himself at his Latin, at his classics, as I did, so that at the age of eight years I was compelled to wear glasses. He must be careful not to strain the little eyes at his scholar’s tasks, not to let the little shoulders

grow round over his scholar's desk. Youth is golden; we should keep it golden, bright, glistening. Youth should frolic, should be sprightly; it should play its cricket, its tennis, its handball. It should run and leap; it should laugh, should sing madrigals and glees, carol with the lark, ring out in chanties, folk songs, ballads, roundelays——"

He talked on. At any instant Mr. Schofield held himself ready to cough vehemently and shout, "More chicken," to drown out Penrod in case the fatal words again fell from those eloquent lips; and Mrs. Schofield and Margaret kept themselves prepared at all times to assist him. So passed a threatening meal, which Mrs. Schofield hurried, by every means with decency, to its conclusion. She felt that somehow they would all be safer out in the dark of the front porch, and led the way thither as soon as possible.

"No cigar, I thank you." Mr. Kinosling, establishing himself in a wicker chair beside Margaret, waved away her father's proffer. "I do not smoke. I have never tasted tobacco in any form." Mrs. Schofield was confirmed in her opinion that this would be an ideal son-in-law. Mr. Schofield was not so sure.

"No," said Mr. Kinosling. "No tobacco for me. No cigar, no pipe, no cigarette, no cheroot. For me, a book—a volume of poems, perhaps. Verses, rhymes, lines metrical and cadenced—those are my dissipation. Tennyson by preference: 'Maud,' or 'Idylls of the King'—poetry of the sound Victorian days; there is none later. Or Longfellow will rest me in a tired hour. Yes; for me, a book, a volume in the hand, held lightly between the fingers."

Mr. Kinosling looked pleasantly at his fingers as he spoke, waving his hand in a curving gesture which brought it into the light of a window faintly illumined from the interior of the house. Then he passed those graceful fingers over his hair, and turned toward Penrod, who was perched upon the railing in a dark corner.

"The evening is touched with a slight coolness," said Mr. Kinosling. "Perhaps I may request the little gentleman——"

"B'gr-r-ruff!" coughed Mr. Schofield. "You'd better change your mind about a cigar."

"No, I thank you. I was about to request the lit——"

"Do try one," Margaret urged. "I'm sure papa's are nice ones. Do try——"

"No, I thank you. I remarked a slight coolness in the air, and my hat is in the hallway. I was about to request——"

"I'll get it for you," said Penrod suddenly.

"If you will be so good," said Mr. Kinoshing. "It is a black bowler hat, little gentleman, and placed upon a table in the hall."

"I know where it is." Penrod entered the door, and a feeling of relief, mutually experienced, carried from one to another of his three relatives their interchanged congratulations that he had recovered his sanity.

"'The day is done, and the darkness,' " began Mr. Kinoshing—and recited that poem entire. He followed it with "The Children's Hour," and after a pause, at the close, to allow his listeners time for a little reflection upon his rendition, he passed his hand over his head, and called, in the direction of the doorway:

"I believe I will take my hat now, little gentleman."

"Here it is," said Penrod, unexpectedly climbing over the porch railing, in the other direction. His mother and father and Margaret had supposed him to be standing in the hallway out of deference, and because he thought it tactful not to interrupt the recitations. All of them remembered, later, that this supposed thoughtfulness on his part struck them as unnatural.

"Very good, little gentleman!" said Mr. Kinoshing, and being somewhat chilled, placed the hat firmly upon his head, pulling it down as far as it would go. It had a pleasant warmth, which he noticed at once. The next instant, he noticed something else, a peculiar sensation of the scalp—a sensation which he was quite unable to define. He lifted his hand to take the hat off, and entered upon a strange experience: his hat seemed to have decided to remain where it was.

"Do you like Tennyson as much as Longfellow, Mr. Kinoshing?" inquired Margaret.

"I—ah—I cannot say," he returned absently. "I—ah—each has his own—ugh! flavor and savor, each his—ah—ah——"

Struck by a strangeness in his tone, she peered at him curiously through the dusk. His outlines were indistinct, but she made out

that his arms were uplifted in a singular gesture. He seemed to be wrenching at his head.

"Is—is anything the matter?" she asked anxiously. "Mr. Kinosing, are you ill?"

"Not at—ugh!—all," he replied in the same odd tone. "I—ah—I believe—*ugh!*"

He dropped his hands from his hat, and rose. His manner was slightly agitated. "I fear I may have taken a trifling—ah—cold. I should—ah—perhaps be—ah—better at home. I will—ah—say good night."

At the steps, he instinctively lifted his hand to remove his hat, but did not do so, and, saying "Good night" again in a frigid voice, departed with visible stiffness from that house, to return no more.

"Well, of all—I!" cried Mrs. Schofield, astounded. "What was the matter? He just went—like that!" She made a flurried gesture. "In heaven's name, Margaret, what *did* you say to him?"

"*I!*" exclaimed Margaret indignantly. "Nothing! He just *went!*"

"Why, he didn't even take off his hat when he said good night!" said Mrs. Schofield.

Margaret, who had crossed to the doorway, caught the ghost of a whisper behind her, where stood Penrod.

"*You bet he didn't!*"

He knew not that he was overheard.

A frightful suspicion flashed through Margaret's mind—a suspicion that Mr. Kinosing's hat would have to be either boiled off or shaved off. With growing horror she recalled Penrod's long absence when he went to bring the hat.

"Penrod," she cried, "let me see your hands!"

She had toiled at those hands herself late that afternoon, nearly scalding her own, but at last achieving a lily purity.

"Let me see your hands!"

She seized them.

Again they were tarred!

Spotted Horses

YES, sir. Flem Snopes has filled that whole country full of spotted horses. You can hear folks running them all day and all night, whooping and hollering, and the horses running back and forth across them little wooden bridges ever now and then kind of like thunder. Here I was this morning pretty near half way to town, with the team ambling along and me setting in the buckboard about half asleep, when all of a sudden something come swurging up outen the bushes and jumped the road clean, without touching hoof to it. It flew right over my team, big as a billboard and flying through the air like a hawk. It taken me thirty minutes to stop my team and untangle the harness and the buckboard and hitch them up again.

That Flem Snopes. I be dog if he ain't a case, now. One morning about ten years ago, the boys was just getting settled down on Varner's porch for a little talk and tobacco, when here come Flem out from behind the counter, with his coat off and his hair all parted, like he might have been clerking for Varner for ten years already. Folks all knowed him; it was a big family of them about five miles down the bottom. That year, at least. Share-cropping. They never stayed on any place over a year. Then they would move on to another place, with the chap or maybe the twins of that year's litter. It was a regular nest of them.

From *The Hamlet*, by William Faulkner; copyright 1940 by Random House, Inc.

But Flem. The rest of them stayed tenant farmers, moving every year, but here come Flem one day, walking out from behind Jody Varner's counter like he owned it. And he wasn't there but a year or two before folks knowed that, if him and Jody was both still in that store in ten years more, it would be Jody clerking for Flem Snopes. Why, that fellow could make a nickel where it wasn't but four cents to begin with. He skun me in two trades, myself, and the fellow that can do that, I just hope he'll get rich before I do; that's all.

All right. So here Flem was, clerking at Varner's, making a nickel here and there and not telling nobody about it. No, sir. Folks never knowed when Flem got the better of somebody lessen the fellow he beat told it. He'd just set there in the store-chair, chewing his tobacco and keeping his own business to hisself, until about a week later we'd find out it was somebody else's business he was keeping to hisself—provided the fellow he trimmed was mad enough to tell it. That's Flem.

We give him ten years to own every thing Jody Varner had. But he never waited no ten years. I reckon you-all know that gal of Uncle Billy Varner's, the youngest one; Eula. Jody's sister. Ever Sunday ever yellow-wheeled buggy and curried riding horse in that country would be hitched to Bill Varner's fence, and the young bucks setting on the porch, swarming around Eula like bees around a honey pot. One of these here kind of big, soft-looking gals that could giggle richer than plowed new-ground. Wouldn't none of them leave before the others, and so they would set there on the porch until time to go home, with some of them with nine and ten miles to ride and then get up tomorrow and go back to the field. So they would all leave together and they would ride in a clump down to the creek ford and hitch them curried horses and yellow-wheeled buggies and get out and fight one another. Then they would get in the buggies again and go on home.

Well, one day about a year ago, one of them yellow-wheeled buggies and one of them curried saddle-horses quit this country. We heard they was heading for Texas. The next day Uncle Billy and Eula and Flem come in to town in Uncle Bill's surrey, and when they come back, Flem and Eula was married. And on

the next day we heard that two more of them yellow-wheeled buggies had left the country. They mought have gone to Texas, too. It's a big place.

Anyway, about a month after the wedding, Flem and Eula went to Texas, too. They was gone pretty near a year. Then one day last month, Eula come back, with a baby. We figgered up, and we decided that it was as well-growed a three-months-old baby as we ever see. It can already pull up on a chair. I reckon Texas makes big men quick, being a big place. Anyway, if it keeps on like it started, it'll be chewing tobacco and voting time it's eight years old.

And so last Friday here come Flem himself. He was on a wagon with another fellow. The other fellow had one of these two-gallon hats and a ivory-handled pistol and a box of ginger snaps sticking out of his hind pocket, and tied to the tail-gate of the wagon was about two dozen of them Texas ponies, hitched to one another with barbed wire. They was colored like parrots and they was quiet as doves, and cre a one of them would kill you quick as a rattlesnake. Nere a one of them had two eyes the same color, and nere a one of them had ever see a bridle, I reckon; and when that Texas man got down offen the wagon and walked up to them to show how gentle they was, one of them cut his vest clean offen him, same as with a razor.

Flem had done already disappeared; he had went on to see his wife, I reckon, and to see if that ere baby had done gone on to the field to help Uncle Billy plow, maybe. It was the Texas man that taken the horses on to Mrs. Littlejohn's lot.

He had a little trouble at first, when they come to the gate, because they hadn't never see a fence before, and when he finally got them in and taken a pair of wire cutters and unhitched them and got them into the barn and poured some shell corn into the trough, they durn nigh tore down the barn. I reckon they thought that shell corn was bugs, maybe. So he left them in the lot and he announced that the auction would begin at sunup to-morrow.

That night we was setting on Mrs. Littlejohn's porch. You-all mind the moon was nigh full that night, and we could watch them spotted varmints swirling along the fence and back and forth across the lot same as minnows in a pond. And then now

and then they would all kind of huddle up against the barn and rest themselves by biting and kicking one another. We would hear a squeal, and then a set of hoofs would go Bam! against the barn, like a pistol. It sounded just like a fellow with a pistol, in a nest of cattymounts, taking his time.

* * *

It wasn't ere a man knowed yet if Flem owned them things or not. They just knowed one thing: that they wasn't never going to know for sho if Flem did or not, or if maybe he didn't just get on that wagon at the edge of town, for the ride or not. Even Eck Snopes didn't know, Flem's own cousin. But wasn't nobody surprised at that. We knowed that Flem would skin Eck quick as he would ere a one of us.

They was there by sunup next morning, some of them come twelve and sixteen miles, with seed-money tied up in tobacco sacks in their overalls, standing along the fence, when the Texas man come out of Mrs. Littlejohn's after breakfast and clumb onto the gate post with that ere white pistol butt sticking outen his hind pocket. He taken a new box of gingersnaps outen his pocket and bit the end offen it like a cigar and spit out the paper, and said the auction was open. And still they was coming up in wagons and a horse- and mule-back and hitching the teams across the road and coming to the fence. Flem wasn't nowhere in sight.

But he couldn't get them started. He begun to work on Eck, because Eck holp him last night to get them into the barn and feed them that shell corn. Eck got out just in time. He come outen that barn like a chip on the crest of a busted dam of water, and clumb into the wagon just in time.

He was working on Eck when Henry Armstid come up in his wagon. Eck was saying he was skeered to bid on one of them, because he might get it, and the Texas man says, "Them ponies? Them little horses?" He clumb down offen the gate post and went toward the horses. They broke and run, and him following them, kind of chirping to them, with his hand out like he was fixing to catch a fly, until he got three or four of them cornered. Then he jumped into them, and then we couldn't see nothing

for a while because of the dust. It was a big cloud of it, and them blare-eyed, spotted things swoaring outen it twenty foot to a jump, in forty directions without counting up. Then the dust settled and there they was, that Texas man and the horse. He had its head twisted clean around like a owl's head. Its legs was braced and it was trembling like a new bride and groaning like a saw mill, and him holding its head wrung clean around on its neck so it was snuffing sky. "Look it over," he says, with his heels dug too and that white pistol sticking outen his pocket and his neck swole up like a spreading adder's until you could just tell what he was saying, cussing the horse and talking to us all at once: "Look him over, the fiddle-headed son of fourteen fathers. Try him, buy him; you will get the best—" Then it was all dust again, and we couldn't see nothing but spotted hide and mane, and that ere Texas man's boot-heels like a couple of walnuts on two strings, and after a while that two-gallon hat come sailing out like a fat old hen crossing a fence.

When the dust settled again, he was just getting outen the far fence corner, brushing himself off. He come and got his hat and brushed it off and come and clumb onto the gate post again. He was breathing hard. He taken the gingersnap box outen his pocket and et one, breathing hard. The hammer-head horse was still running round and round the lot like a merry-go-round at a fair. That was when Henry Armstid come shoving up to the gate in them patched overalls and one of them dangle-armed shirts of hisn. Hadn't nobody noticed him until then. We was all watching the Texas man and the horses. Even Mrs. Littlejohn; she had done come out and built a fire under the wash-pot in her back yard, and she would stand at the fence a while and then go back into the house and come out again with a arm full of wash and stand at the fence again. Well, here come Henry shoving up, and then we see Mrs. Armstid right behind him, in that ere faded wrapper and sunbonnet and them tennis shoes. "Git on back to that wagon," Henry says.

"Henry," she says.

"Here, boys," the Texas man says; "make room for missus to git up and see. Come on, Henry," he says; "here's your chance to buy that saddle-horse missus has been wanting. What about ten dollars, Henry?"

"Henry," Mrs. Armstid says. She put her hand on Henry's arm. Henry knocked her hand down.

"Git on back to that wagon, like I told you," he says.

Mrs. Armstid never moved. She stood behind Henry, with her hands rolled into her dress, not looking at nothing. "He hain't no more despair than to buy one of them things," she says. "And us not five dollars ahead of the pore house, he hain't no more despair." It was the truth, too. They ain't never made more than a bare living offen that place of theirs, and them with four chaps and the very clothes they wears she earns by weaving by the fire-light at night while Henry's asleep.

"Shut your mouth and git on back to that wagon," Henry says. "Do you want I taken a wagon stake to you here in the big road?"

Well, that Texas man taken one look at her. Then he begun on Eck again, like Henry wasn't even there. But Eck was skeered. "I can git me a snapping turtle or a water moccasin for nothing. I ain't going to buy none."

So the Texas man said he would give Eck a horse. "To start the auction, and because you holp me last night. If you'll start the bidding on the next horse," he says, "I'll give you that fiddle-head horse."

I wish you could have seen them, standing there with their seed-money in their pockets, watching that Texas man give Eck Snopes a live horse, all fixed to call him a fool if he taken it or not. Finally Eck says he'll take it. "Only I just starts the bidding," he says. "I don't have to buy the next one lessen I ain't overtopped." The Texas man said all right, and Eck bid a dollar on the next one, with Henry Armstid standing there with his mouth already open, watching Eck and the Texas man like a mad-dog or something. "A dollar," Eck says.

The Texas man looked at Eck. His mouth was already open too, like he had started to say something and what he was going to say had up and died on him. "A dollar?" he says. "One dollar? You mean, *one* dollar, Eck?"

"Durn it," Eck says; "two dollars, then."

Well, sir, I wish you could a seen that Texas man. He taken out that gingersnap box and held it up and looked into it, careful, like it might have been a diamond ring in it, or a spider. Then he throwed it away and wiped his face with a bandanna.

"Well," he says. "Well. Two dollars. Two dollars. Is your pulse all right, Eck?" he says. "Do you have ager-sweats at night, maybe?" he says. "Well," he says, "I got to take it. But are you boys going to stand there and see Eck get two horses at a dollar a head?"

That done it. I be dog if he wasn't nigh as smart as Flem Snopes. He hadn't no more than got the words outen his mouth before here was Henry Armstid, waving his hand. "Three dollars," Henry says. Mrs. Armstid tried to hold him again. He knocked her hand off, shoving up to the gate post.

"Mister," Mrs. Armstid says, "we got chaps in the house and not corn to feed the stock. We got five dollars I earned my chaps a-weaving after dark, and him snoring in the bed. And he hain't no more despair."

"Henry bids three dollars," the Texas man says. "Raise him a dollar, Eck, and the horse is yours."

"Henry," Mrs. Armstid says.

"Raise him, Eck," the Texas man says.

"Four dollars," Eck says.

"Five dollars," Henry says, shaking his fist. He shoved up right under the gate post. Mrs. Armstid was looking at the Texas man too.

"Mister," she says, "if you take that five dollars I earned my chaps a-weaving for one of them things, it'll be a curse onto you and yourn during all the time of man."

But it wasn't no stopping Henry. He had shoved up, waving his fist at the Texas man. He opened it; the money was in nickels and quarters, and one dollar bill that looked like a cow's cud. "Five dollars," he says. "And the man that raises it'll have to beat my head off, or I'll beat hisn."

"All right," the Texas man says. "Five dollars is bid. But don't you shake your hand at me."

* * *

It taken till nigh sundown before the last one was sold. He got them hotted up once and the bidding got up to seven dollars and a quarter, but most of them went around three or four dollars, him setting on the gate post and picking the horses out

one at a time by mouth-word, and Mrs. Littlejohn pumping up and down at the tub and stopping and coming to the fence for a while and going back to the tub again. She had done got done too, and the wash was hung on the line in the back yard, and we could smell supper cooking. Finally they was all sold; he swapped the last two and the wagon for a buckboard.

We was all kind of tired, but Henry Armstid looked more like a mad-dog than ever. When he bought, Mrs. Armstid had went back to the wagon, setting in it behind them two rabbit-sized, bone-pore mules, and the wagon itself looking like it would fall all to pieces soon as the mules moved. Henry hadn't even waited to pull it outen the road; it was still in the middle of the road and her setting in it, not looking at nothing, ever since this morning.

Henry was right up against the gate. He went up to the Texas man. "I bought a horse and I paid cash," Henry says. "And yet you expect me to stand around here until they are all sold before I can get my horse. I'm going to take my horse outen that lot."

The Texas man looked at Henry. He talked like he might have been asking for a cup of coffee at the table. "Take your horse," he says.

Then Henry quit looking at the Texas man. He begun to swallow, holding onto the gate. "Ain't you going to help me?" he says.

"It ain't my horse," the Texas man says.

Henry never looked at the Texas man again, he never looked at nobody. "Who'll help me catch my horse?" he says. Never nobody said nothing. "Bring the plowline," Henry says. Mrs. Armstid got outen the wagon and brought the plowline. The Texas man got down offen the post. The woman made to pass him, carrying the rope.

"Don't you go in there, missus," the Texas man says.

Henry opened the gate. He didn't look back. "Come on here," he says.

"Don't you go in there, missus," the Texas man says.

Mrs. Armstid wasn't looking at nobody, neither, with her hands across her middle, holding the rope. "I reckon I better," she says. Her and Henry went into the lot. The horses broke and run. Henry and Mrs. Armstid followed.

"Get him into the corner," Henry says. They got Henry's horse cornered finally, and Henry taken the rope, but Mrs. Armstid let the horse get out. They hemmed it up again, but Mrs. Armstid let it get out again, and Henry turned and hit her with the rope. "Why didn't you head him back?" Henry says. He hit her again. "Why didn't you?" It was about that time I looked around and see Flem Snopes standing there.

It was the Texas man that done something. He moved fast for a big man. He caught the rope before Henry could hit the third time, and Henry whirled and made like he would jump at the Texas man. But he never jumped. The Texas man went and taken Henry's arm and led him outen the lot. Mrs. Armstid come behind them and the Texas man taken some money outen his pocket and he give it into Mrs. Armstid's hand. "Get him into the wagon and taken him on home," the Texas man says, like he might have been telling them he enjoyed his supper.

Then here come Flem. "What's that for, Buck?" Flem says.

"Thinks he bought one of them ponies," the Texas man says. "Get him on away, missus."

But Henry wouldn't go. "Give him back that money," he says. "I bought that horse and I aim to have him if I have to shoot him."

And there was Flem, standing there with his hands in his pockets, chewing, like he had just happened to be passing.

"You take your money and I take my horse," Henry says. "Give it back to him," he says to Mrs. Armstid.

"You don't own no horse of mine," the Texas man says. "Get him on home, missus."

Then Henry seen Flem. "You got something to do with these horses," he says. "I bought one. Here's the money for it." He taken the bill outen Mrs. Armstid's hand. He offered it to Flem. "I bought one. Ask him. Here. Here's the money," he says, giving the bill to Flem.

When Flem taken the money, the Texas man dropped the rope he had snatched outen Henry's hand. He had done sent Eck Snopes's boy up to the store for another box of gingersnaps, and he taken the box outen his pocket and looked into it. It was empty and he dropped it on the ground. "Mr. Snopes will have your money for you to-morrow," he says to Mrs. Armstid. "You

can get it from him to-morrow. He don't own no horse. You get him into the wagon and get him on home." Mrs. Armstid went back to the wagon and got in. "Where's that ere buckboard I bought?" the Texas man says. It was after sundown then. And then Mrs. Littlejohn come out on the porch and rung the supper bell.

* * *

I come on in and et supper. Mrs. Littlejohn would bring in a pan of bread or something, then she would go out to the porch a minute and come back and tell us. The Texas man had hitched his team to the buckboard he had swapped them last two horses for, and him and Flem had gone, and then she told that the rest of them that never had ropes had went back to the store with I.O. Snopes to get some ropes, and wasn't nobody at the gate but Henry Armstid, and Mrs. Armstid setting in the wagon in the road, and Eck Snopes and that boy of hisn. "I don't care how many of them fool men gets killed by them things," Mrs. Littlejohn says, "but I ain't going to let Eck Snopes take that boy into that lot again." So she went down to the gate, but she come back without the boy or Eck neither.

"It ain't no need to worry about that boy," I says. "He's charmed." He was right behind Eck last night when Eck went to help feed them. The whole drove of them jumped clean over that boy's head and never touched him. It was Eck that touched him. Eck snatched him into the wagon and taken a rope and frailed the tar outen him.

So I had done et and went to my room and was undressing, long as I had a long trip to make next day; I was trying to sell a machine to Mrs. Bundren up past Whiteleaf; when Henry Armstid opned that gate and went in by hisself. They couldn't make him wait for the balance of them to get back with their ropes. Eck Snopes said he tried to make Henry wait, but Henry wouldn't do it. Eck said Henry walked right up to them and that when they broke, they run clean over Henry like a hay-mow breaking down. Eck said he snatched that boy of hisn out of the way just in time and that them things went through that gate like a creek flood and into the wagons and teams hitched side the road, busting wagon tongues and snapping harness like it was

fishing-line, with Mrs. Armstid still setting in their wagon in the middle of it like something carved outen wood. Then they scattered, wild horses and tame mules with pieces of harness and single trees dangling offen them, both ways up and down the road.

"There goes ourn, paw!" Eck says his boy said. "There it goes, into Mrs. Littlejohn's house." Eck says it run right up the steps and into the house like a boarder late for supper. I reckon so. Anyway, I was in my room, in my underclothes, with one sock on and one sock in my hand, leaning out the window when the commotion busted out, when I heard something run into the melodeon in the hall; it sounded like a railroad engine. Then the door to my room come sailing in like when you throw a tin bucket top into the wind and I looked over my shoulder and see something that looked like a fourteen-foot pinwheel a-blaring its eyes at me. It had to blare them fast, because I was already done jumped out the window.

I reckon it was anxious, too. I reckon it hadn't never seen barbed wire or shell corn before, but I know it hadn't never seen underclothes before, or maybe it was a sewing-machine agent it hadn't never seen. Anyway, it swirled and turned to run back up the hall and outen the house, when it met Eck Snopes and that boy just coming in, carrying a rope. It swirled again and run down the hall and out the back door just in time to meet Mrs. Littlejohn. She had just gathered up the clothes she had washed, and she was coming onto the back porch with a armful of washing in one hand and a scrubbing-board in the other, when the horse skidded up to her, trying to stop and swirl again. It never taken Mrs. Littlejohn no time a-tall.

"Git outen here, you son," she says. She hit it across the face with the scrubbing-board split as neat as ere a axe could have done it, and when the horse swirled to run back up the hall, she hit it again with what was left of the scrubbing-board, not on the head this time. "And stay out," she says.

Eck and that boy was half-way down the hall by this time. I reckon that horse looked like a pinwheel to Eck too. "Git to hell outen here, Ad!" Eck says. Only there wasn't time. Eck dropped flat on his face, but the boy never moved. The boy was about a

yard tall maybe, in overalls just like Eck's; that horse swoared over his head without touching a hair. I saw that, because I was just coming back up the front steps, still carrying that ere sock and still in my underclothes, when the horse come onto the porch again. It taken one look at me and swirled again and run to the end of the porch and jumped the banisters and the lot fence like a hen-hawk and lit in the lot running and went out the gate again and jumped eight or ten upside-down wagons and went on down the road. It was a full moon then. Mrs. Armstid was still setting in the wagon like she had done been carved outen wood and left there and forgot.

That horse. It ain't never missed a lick. It was going about forty miles a hour when it come to the bridge over the creek. It would have had a clear road, but it so happened that Vernon Tull was already using the bridge when it got there. He was coming back from town; he hadn't heard about the auction; him and his wife and three daughters and Mrs. Tull's aunt, all setting in chairs in the wagon bed, and all asleep, including the mules. They waked up when the horse hit the bridge one time, but Tull said the first he knew was when the mules tried to turn the wagon around in the middle of the bridge and he seen that spotted varmint run right twixt the mules and run up the wagon tongue like a squirrel. He said he just had time to hit it across the face with his whip-stock, because about that time the mules turned the wagon around on that ere one-way bridge and that horse clumb across one of the mules and jumped down onto the bridge again and went on, with Vernon standing up in the wagon and kicking at it.

Tull said the mules turned in the harness and clumb back into the wagon too, with Tull trying to beat them out again, with the reins wrapped around his wrist. After that he says all he seen was overturned chairs and womenfolks' legs and white drawers shining in the moonlight, and his mules and that spotted horse going on up the road like a ghost.

The mules jerked Tull outen the wagon and drug him a spell on the bridge before the reins broke. They thought at first that he was dead, and while they was kneeling around him, picking the bridge splinters outen him, here come Eck and that boy,

still carrying the rope. They was running and breathing a little hard. "Where'd he go?" Eck says.

* * *

I went back and got my pants and shirt and shoes on just in time to go and help get Henry Armstid outen the trash in the lot. I be dog if he didn't look like he was dead, with his head hanging back and his teeth showing in the moonlight, and a little rim of white under his eyelids. We could still hear them horses, here and there; hadn't none of them got more than four—five miles away yet, not knowing the country, I reckon. So we could hear them and folks yelling now and then: "Whooeey. Head him!"

We toted Henry into Mrs. Littlejohn's. She was in the hall; she hadn't put down the armful of clothes. She taken one look at us, and she laid down the busted scrubbing-board and taken up the lamp and opened a empty door. "Bring him in here," she says.

We toted him in and laid him on the bed. Mrs. Littlejohn set the lamp on the dresser, still carrying the clothes. "I'll declare, you men," she says. Our shadows was way up the wall, tiptoeing too; we could hear ourselves breathing. "Better get his wife," Mrs. Littlejohn says. She went out, carrying the clothes.

"I reckon we had," Quick says. "Go get her, somebody."

"Whyn't you go?" Winterbottom says.

"Let Ernest git her," Durley says. "He lives neighbors with them."

Ernest went to fetch her. I be dog if Henry didn't look like he was dead. Mrs. Littlejohn come back, with a kettle and some towels. She went to work on Henry, and then Mrs. Armstid and Ernest come in. Mrs. Armstid come to the foot of the bed and stood there, with her hands rolled into her apron, watching what Mrs. Littlejohn was doing, I reckon.

"You men get outen the way," Mrs. Littlejohn says. "Git outside," she says. "See if you can't find something else to play with that will kill some more of you."

"Is he dead?" Winterbottom says.

"It ain't your fault if he ain't," Mrs. Littlejohn says. "Go tell

Will Varner to come up here. I reckon a man ain't so different from a mule, come long come short. Except maybe a mule's got more sense."

We went to get Uncle Billy. It was a full moon. We could hear them, now and then, four mile away: "Whooley. Head him." The country was full of them, one on ever wooden bridge in the land, running across it like thunder: "Whooley. There he goes. Head him."

We hadn't got far before Henry begun to scream. I reckon Mrs. Littlejohn's water had brung him to; anyway, he wasn't dead. We went on to Uncle Billy's. The house was dark. We called to him, and after a while the window opened and Uncle Billy put his head out, peart as a peckerwood, listening. "Are they still trying to catch them durn rabbits?" he says.

He come down, with his britches on over his night-shirt and his suspenders dangling, carrying his horse-doctoring grip. "Yes, sir," he says, cocking his head like a woodpecker; "they're still a-trying."

We could hear Henry before we reached Mrs. Littlejohn's. He was going Ah-Ah-Ah. We stopped in the yard. Uncle Billy went on in. We could hear Henry. We stood in the yard, hearing them on the bridges, this-a-way and that: "Whooley. Whooley."

"Eck Snopes ought to caught hisn," Ernest says.

"Looks like he ought," Winterbottom said.

Henry was going Ah-Ah-Ah steady in the house; then he begun to scream. "Uncle Billy's started," Quick says. We looked into the hall. We could see the light where the door was. Then Mrs. Littlejohn come out.

"Will needs some help," she says. "You, Ernest. You'll do." Ernest went into the house.

"Hear them?" Quick said. "That one was on Four Mile bridge." We could hear them; it sounded like thunder a long way off; it didn't last long:

"Whooley."

We could hear Henry: "Ah-Ah-Ah-Ah-Ah."

"They are both started now," Winterbottom says. "Ernest too."

That was early in the night. Which was a good thing, because it taken a long night for folks to chase them things right and for Henry to lay there and holler, being as Uncle Billy never had

none of this here chloryfoam to set Henry's leg with. So it was considerate in Flem to get them started early. And what do you reckon Flem's com-ment was?

That's right. Nothing. Because he wasn't there. Hadn't nobody see him since that Texas man left.

* * *

That was Saturday night. I reckon Mrs. Armstid got home about daylight, to see about the chaps. I don't know where they thought her and Henry was. But lucky the oldest one was a gal, about twelve, big enough to take care of the little ones. Which she did for the next two days. Mrs. Armstid would nurse Henry all night and work in the kitchen for hern and Henry's keep, and in the afternoon she would drive home (it was about four miles) to see to the chaps. She would cook up a pot of victuals and leave it on the stove, and the gal would bar the house and keep the little ones quiet. I would hear Mrs. Littlejohn and Mrs. Armstid talking in the kitchen. "How are the chaps making out?" Mrs. Littlejohn says.

"All right," Mrs. Armstid says.

"Don't they git skeered at night?" Mrs. Littlejohn says.

"Ina May bars the door when I leave," Mrs. Armstid says. "She's got the axe in bed with her. I reckon she can make out."

I reckon they did. And I reckon Mrs. Armstid was waiting for Flem to come back to town; hadn't nobody seen him until this morning; to get her money the Texas man said Flem was keeping for her. Sho. I reckon she was.

Anyway, I heard Mrs. Armstid and Mrs. Littlejohn talking in the kitchen this morning while I was eating breakfast. Mrs. Littlejohn had just told Mrs. Armstid that Flem was in town. "You can ask him for that five dollars," Mrs. Littlejohn says.

"You reckon he'll give it to me?" Mrs. Armstid says.

Mrs. Littlejohn was washing dishes, washing them like a man, like they was made out of iron. "No," she says. "But asking him won't do no hurt. It might shame him. I don't reckon it will, but it might."

"If he wouldn't give it back, it ain't no use to ask," Mrs. Armstid says.

"Suit yourself," Mrs. Littlejohn says. "It's your money."

I could hear the dishes.

"Do you reckon he might give it back to me?" Mrs. Armstid says. "That Texas man said he would. He said I could get it from Mr. Snopes later."

"Then go and ask him for it," Mrs. Littlejohn says.

I could hear the dishes.

"He won't give it back to me," Mrs. Armstid says.

"All right," Mrs. Littlejohn says. "Don't ask him for it, then."

I could hear the dishes; Mrs. Armstid was helping. "You don't reckon he would, do you?" she says. Mrs. Littlejohn never said nothing. It sounded like she was throwing the dishes at one another. "Maybe I better go and talk to Henry about it," Mrs. Armstid says.

"I would," Mrs. Littlejohn says. I be dog if it didn't sound like she had two plates in her hands, beating them together. "Then Henry can buy another five-dollar horse with it. Maybe he'll buy one next time that will out and out kill him. If I thought that, I'd give you back the money, myself."

"I reckon I better talk to him first," Mrs. Armstid said. Then it sounded like Mrs. Littlejohn taken up all the dishes and threwed them at the cook-stove, and I come away.

That was this morning. I had been up to Bundren's and back, and I thought that things would have kind of settled down. So after breakfast, I went up to the store. And there was Flem, setting in the store chair and whittling, like he might not have ever moved since he come to clerk for Jody Varner. I.O. was leaning in the door, in his shirt sleeves and with his hair parted too, same as Flem was before he turned the clerking job over to I.O. It's a funny thing about them Snopes: they all looks alike, yet there ain't ere a two of them that claims brothers. They're always just cousins, like Flem and Eck and Flem and I.O. Eck was there too, squatting against the wall, him and that boy, eating cheese and crackers outen a sack; they told me that Eck hadn't been home a-tall. And that Lon Quick hadn't got back to town, even. He followed his horse clean down to Samson's Bridge, with a wagon and a camp outfit. Eck finally caught one of hisn. It run into a blind lane at Freeman's and Eck and the boy taken and tied their rope across the end of the lane, about three foot high. The

horse come to the end of the lane and whirled and run back without ever stopping. Eck says it never seen the rope a-tall. He says it looked just like one of these here Christmas pinwheels. "Didn't it try to run again?" I says.

"No," Eck says, eating a bite of cheese offen his knife blade. "Just kicked some."

"Kicked some?" I says.

"It broke its neck," Eck says.

Well, they was squatting there, about six of them, talking, talking at Flem; never nobody knowed yet if Flem had ere a interest in them horses or not. So finally I come right out and asked him. "Flem's done skun all of us so much," I says, "that we're proud of him. Come on, Flem," I says, "how much did you and that Texas man make offen them horses? You can tell us. Ain't nobody here but Eck that bought one of them; the others ain't got back to town yet, and Eck's your own cousin; he'll be proud to hear, too. How much did you-all make?"

They was all whittling, not looking at Flem, making like they was studying. But you could a heard a pin drop. And I.O. He had been rubbing his back up and down on the door, but he stopped now, watching Flem like a pointing dog. Flem finished cutting the sliver offen his stick. He spit across the porch, into the road. "'Twarn't none of my horses," he says.

I.O. cackled, like a hen, slapping his legs with both hands. "You boys might just as well quit trying to get ahead of Flem," he said.

Well, about that time I see Mrs. Armstid come outen Mrs. Littlejohn's gate, coming up the road. I never said nothing. I says, "Well, if a man can't take care of himself in a trade, he can't blame the man that trims him."

Flem never said nothing, trimming at the stick. He hadn't seen Mrs. Armstid. "Yes, sir," I says. "A fellow like Henry Armstid ain't got nobody but hisself to blame."

"Course he ain't," I.O. says. He ain't seen her, neither. "Henry Armstid's a born fool. Always is been. If Flem hadn't a got his money, somebody else would."

We looked at Flem. He never moved. Mrs. Armstid come on up the road.

"That's right," I says. "But, come to think of it, Henry never

bought no horse." We looked at Flem; you could a heard a match drop. "That Texas man told her to get that five dollars back from Flem next day. I reckon Flem's done already taken that money to Mrs. Littlejohn's and give it to Mrs. Armstid."

We watched Flem. I.O. quit rubbing his back against the door again. After a while Flem raised his head and spit across the porch, into the dust. I.O. cackled, just like a hen. "Ain't he a beating fellow, now?" I.O. says.

Mrs. Armstid was getting closer, so I kept on talking, watching to see if Flem would look up and see her. But he never looked up. I went on talking about Tull, about how he was going to sue Flem, and Flem setting there, whittling his stick, not saying nothing else after he said they wasn't none of his horses.

Then I.O. happened to look around. He seen Mrs. Armstid. "Pssst!" he says. Flem looked up. "Here she comes!" I.O. says. "Go out the back. I'll tell her you done went in to town to-day."

But Flem never moved. He just set there, whittling, and we watched Mrs. Armstid come up onto the porch, in that ere faded sunbonnet and wrapper and them tennis shoes that made a kind of hissing noise on the porch. She come onto the porch and stopped, her hands rolled into her dress in front, not looking at nothing.

"He said Saturday," she says, "that he wouldn't sell Henry no horse. He said I could get the money from you."

Flem looked up. The knife never stopped. It went on trimming off a sliver same as if he was watching it. "He taken that money off with him when he left," Flem says.

Mrs. Armstid never looked at nothing. We never looked at her, neither, except that boy of Eck's. He had a half-et cracker in his hand, watching her, chewing.

"He said Henry hadn't bought no horse," Mrs. Armstid says. "He said for me to get the money from you to-day."

"I reckon he forgot about it," Flem said. "He taken that money off with him Saturday." He whittled again. I.O. kept on rubbing his back, slow. He licked his lips. After a while the woman looked up the road, where it went on up the hill, toward the graveyard. She looked up that way for a while, with that boy of Eck's watching her and I.O. rubbing his back slow against the door. Then she turned back toward the steps.

"I reckon it's time to get dinner started," she says.

"How's Henry this morning, Mrs. Armstid?" Winterbottom says.

She looked at Winterbottom; she almost stopped. "He's resting, I thank you kindly," she says.

Flem got up, outhen the chair, putting his knife away. He spit across the porch. "Wait a minute, Mrs. Armstid," he says. She stopped again. She didn't look at him. Flem went on into the store, with I.O. done quit rubbing his back now, with his head craned after Flem, and Mrs. Armstid standing there with her hands rolled into her dress, not looking at nothing. A wagon come up the road and passed; it was Freeman, on the way to town. Then Flem come out again, with I.O. still watching him. Flem had one of these little striped sacks of Jody Varner's candy; I bet he still owes Jody that nickel, too. He put the sack into Mrs. Armstid's hand, like he would have put it into a hollow stump. He spit again across the porch. "A little sweetening for the chaps," he says.

"You're right kind," Mrs. Armstid says. She held the sack of candy in her hand, not looking at nothing. Eck's boy was watching the sack, the half-et cracker in his hand; he wasn't chewing now. He watched Mrs. Armstid roll the sack into her apron. "I reckon I better get on back and help with dinner," she says. She turned and went back across the porch. Flem set down in the chair again and opened his knife. He spit across the porch again, past Mrs. Armstid where she hadn't went down the steps yet. Then she went on, in that ere sunbonnet and wrapper all the same color, back down the road toward Mrs. Littlejohn's. You couldn't see her dress move, like a natural woman walking. She looked like a old snag still standing up and moving along on a high water. We watched her turn in at Mrs. Littlejohn's and go outhen sight. Flem was whittling. I.O. begun to rub his back on the door. Then he begun to cackle, just like a durn hen.

"You boys might just as well quit trying," I.O. says. "You can't git ahead of Flem. You can't touch him. Ain't he a sight, now?"

I be dog if he ain't. If I had brung a herd of wild cattymounts into town and sold them to my neighbors and kinfolks, they would have lynched me. Yes, sir.

The Synthesis of News

ONE of the first enemy reporters I came to terms with in the days of my beginnings was an amiable, ribald fellow with a pot belly and a pointed beard, by name Leander J. de Bekker. He hailed from Kentucky by way of Cincinnati and Chicago, and was proud of the fact that he was of Dutch descent. The Dutch, he told me at our first meeting, were the champion beer-drinkers of Christendom, and had invented not only free lunch but also the growler, which got its name, so he said, from the Dutch word *grauw*, signifying the great masses of the plain people. This de Bekker and I made many long and laborious treks together, for he was doing South Baltimore for the *American* when Max Ways sent me there to break in for the *Herald*, and South Baltimore was a vast area of indefinite boundaries and poor communications, with five or six miles of waterfront. At its upper end were the wharves used by the Chesapeake Bay packets, and at its lower end the great peninsula of Locust Point, given over mainly to railroad-yards and grain elevators, but adorned at its nose by Fort McHenry, the bombardment of which in 1814, allegedly by a B—h fleet, inspired Francis Scott Key to write "The Star-Spangled Banner."

There was always something doing in that expansive territory, especially for a young reporter to whom all the major catastrophes and imbecilities of mankind were still more or less novel,

From *Newspaper Days*, by H. L. Mencken; copyright 1941 by Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.

and hence delightful. If there was not a powder explosion at Fort McHenry, which was armed with smooth-bore muzzle-loaders dating from 1794, there was sure to be a collision between two Bay packets, and if the cops had nothing in the way of a homicide it was safe to reckon on a three-alarm fire. The blackamoors of South Baltimore were above the common in virulence, and the main streets of their ghetto—York street, Hughsie street and Elbow lane—always ran blood on Saturday nights. It was in Hughsie street, one lovely Summer evening in 1899, that I saw my first murderess—a nearly decapitated colored lady who had been caught by her beau in treason to her vows. And it was in the jungle of warehouses and railroad tracks on Locust Point that I covered my first fire.

De Bekker and I and the reporter for the *Sunpaper* (I forget his name) attended all these public events together, and since de Bekker was the eldest of the trio, and had a beard to prove it, he set the tone and tempo of our endeavors. If, on an expedition to the iron wilds of Locust Point, he decided suddenly that it was time for a hiatus and a beer, we downed tools at once and made for the nearest saloon, which was never more than a block away. Unhappily, the beers of those days, especially along the waterfront, ran only a dozen or so to the keg, and it was thus sometimes difficult for us youngsters, after two or three of them, to throw ourselves into gear again. At such times de Bekker's professional virtuosity and gift for leadership were demonstrated most beautifully.

"Why in hell," he would say, "should we walk our legs off trying to find out the name of a Polack stevedore kicked overboard by a mule? The cops are too busy dragging for the body to ask it, and when they turn it in at last, maybe tomorrow or the day after, it will be so improbable that no union printer in Baltimore will be able to set it up. Even so, they will only guess at it, as they guess at three-fourths of all the names on their books. Moreover, who gives a damn *what* it was? The fact that another poor man has given his life to engorge the Interests is not news: it happens every ten minutes. The important thing here, the one thing that brings us vultures of the press down into this god-forsaken wilderness is that the manner of his death was unusual—that men are not kicked overboard by mules every day. I move

you, my esteemed contemporaries, that the name of the deceased be Ignaz Karpinski, that the name of his widow be Marie, that his age was thirty-six, that he lived at 1777 Fort avenue, and that he leaves eleven minor children."

It seemed so reasonable to the *Sun* reporter and me that we could think of no objection, and so the sad facts were reported in all three Baltimore morning papers the next day, along with various lively details that occurred to de Bekker after he had got down another beer. This labor-saving device was in use the whole time I covered South Baltimore for the *Herald*, and I never heard any complaint against it. Every one of the three city editors, comparing his paper to the other two, was surprised and pleased to discover that his reporter always got names and addresses right, and all three of us were sometimes commended for our unusual accuracy. De Bekker, I should add, was a fellow of conscience, and never stooped to what he called faking. That is to say, he never manufactured a story out of the whole cloth. If, under his inspiration, we reported that a mad dog had run amok down the Point and bitten twenty children, there was always an actual dog somewhere in the background, and our count of the victims was at least as authentic as any the cops would make. And if, when an immigrant ship tied up at the North German Lloyd pier, we made it known that fifteen sets of twins had been born during the voyage from Bremen, there were always some genuine twins aboard to support us.

Thus, in my tenderest years, I became familiar with the great art of synthesizing news, and gradually took in the massive fact that journalism is not an exact science. Later, as I advanced up the ladder of the press, I encountered synthesists less conscientious than de Bekker,* and indeed became one myself. It was well for me that I showed some talent, else my career might have come to disaster a year or so later, when I was promoted to the City Hall. There I found myself set against two enemy reporters of polished technic and great industry—Frank Kent of the *Sun-paper* and Walter Alexander of the *American*. Kent was a young-

* He left Baltimore in 1901 to join the staff of the Brooklyn *Standard-Union*, and afterward worked for the New York *Tribune* and *Evening Post*. In 1908 he published a dictionary of music, and in 1921 a work on words and phrases in collaboration with Dr. Frank H. Vizetelly, editor of the *Standard Dictionary*. He died in 1931.

ster only a little older than I was, but he was a smart fellow, and Alec was already covering his third or fourth city administration, and knew every rat-hole in the City Hall. He remained there for years afterward, and became, in the end, a bottomless abyss of municipal case and precedent. Mayors, comptrollers, health commissioners, city councilmen and other such transient jobholders consulted him as diligently as they consulted the daily racing dope. Even in 1900 he knew more than any of them, and was thus a formidable competitor.

Once I had got my legs, Kent and I tried to rope him into a camorra such as de Bekker operated in South Baltimore, but he knew very well that he would contribute a great deal more to its assets than we would, so he played coy, and there was seldom a day that he didn't beat us. One week he let us have it daily with both barrels, and we got into trouble with our city editors. There was, of course, only one remedy, and we were forced into it in haste. Thereafter, we met every afternoon in Reilly's ale-house opposite the City Hall, and concocted a fake to bounce him. That fake appeared the next morning in both the *Sun* and the *Herald*, with refinements of detail that coincided perfectly, so all the city editors of the town, including Alec's, accepted it as gospel. For a week or two Alec tried to blitz and baffle us with real news beats, but when we proceeded from one fake a day to two, and then to three, four, and even more, he came in asking for terms, and thereafter the three of us lived in brotherly concord, with Alec turning up most of the news and Kent and I embellishing it. Our flames of fancy having been fanned, we couldn't shut them off at once, but whenever we thought of a prime fake we let Alec have it also. If it was so improbable that his somewhat literal mind gagged at it we refrained from printing it ourselves, but in such cases we always saved it from going to waste by giving it to the City Hall man of the *Deutsche Correspondent*, a Mannheimer who was ready to believe anything, provided only it was incredible. Once we planted on him an outbreak of yellow fever in the City Jail, but inasmuch as his account of it was printed in German, and buried in columns of gaudy stuff about German weddings, funerals, bowling contests, and other such orgies, our city editors never discovered it.

Kent and I remained in the City Hall about a year, and until

the end of that time our relations with Alec were kindly and even loving; in fact, we continued on good terms with him until his lamented death many years afterward. Unhappily, our successors never got next to him as we had, and in consequence he beat them almost every day, and often in a dramatic and paralyzing manner. In the end it was impossible for any rival reporter to stand up to him, and the rich *Sun* had to shanghai him from the poor *American* to avoid disgrace and ruin. More than once Baltimoreans of public spirit, even in the City Hall, proposed that he be elected Mayor himself, and in perpetuity, but like nearly every other good newspaper man, he looked on political office as ignominious, and preferred to remain a reporter. When he died at last the City Hall flag was at half-mast for a week.

The failure of the post-Kent-Mencken flight of City Hall reporters to bring him to a stand as the Old Masters had done was probably due not only to the natural recession of talent among them, but also to a curious episode that had made a dreadful pothole on the *Herald* and was still remembered uneasily by all the journalists of Baltimore. The central figure of that episode was a reporter whose name I shall suppress, for he was unhappily an addict to the hand-set whiskey of the Baltimore printers, and spent a large part of his time sleeping it off in police-stations. Let there be a murder, a fire or even an earthquake, and he would snore through it in one of the roomy barroom chairs that were then provided for the use of professional witnesses, straw bondsmen, and cops on reserve. Max Ways was a man of enlarged views, and had no objection to alcoholism as such, but a narcolept was of little more use to him than a dead man, and one rainy Sunday in the early Winter of 1898-99, being somewhat exacerbated by drink himself, he had the culprit before him, and gave him such a bawling out that even the office boys were aghast.

Moreover, that bawling out was reinforced by an ultimatum. If, by 6 p. m. of that same day, the culprit did not appear in the office with a story worth at least two sticks* he was to consider himself fired for the nth and last time, with no hope of appeal, pardon, commutation or reprieve, whether in this world or the next. The poor fish, alarmed, shuffled off to police headquarters and begged the cops to help him, but they reported that the

* A stick is about two inches of type.

bleak, filthy weather had adjourned all human endeavor in the town, and that they had nothing in hand save two lost colored children and a runaway horse. He then proceeded to such other public offices as were open, but always he met with the same response. Somewhere or other he picked up the death of a saloon-keeper, but the saloonkeeper was obscure, and thus worth, at most, only a few lines. It began to look hopeless, and he slogged on despairingly, soaked by the rain and scarcely knowing where he was going.

This woeful tramp took him at last to the shopping district, and he started to plod it just as dusk was coming down. Simultaneously, the arc-lights which, in that era, hung outside every store of any pretensions began to splutter on, and in his gloomy contemplation of them he was suddenly seized with an idea—the first, in all likelihood, that had occurred to him for long months, and maybe even years. Those arc-lights were above the range of pedestrians on the sidewalks, but it would be easy to reach any of them with an umbrella. Suppose a passer-by carrying a steel-rodded umbrella should lift it high enough to clear another passer-by's umbrella, and its ferrule should touch the steel socket that held the carbon of one of the lights, and suppose there should be some leakage of electricity, and it should shoot down the umbrella rod, and into the umbrella's owner's arm, and then, facilitated by his wet clothes, down his legs and into the sidewalk—what would be the effect upon the man? The speculation was an interesting one, and the poor fish paused awhile to revolve it in his deteriorated mind.

The next morning the *Herald* printed a story saying that a man named William T. Benson, aged forty-one, a visitor from Washington, had made the experiment accidentally in West Baltimore street, and had been knocked, figuratively speaking, into a cocked hat. There was a neat description of the way the current had thrown him half way across the street, and a statement from him detailing his sensations *en route*. He had not, he said, lost consciousness, but gigantic pinwheels in all the colors of the rainbow whirled before his eyes, and in the palm of his right hand was a scarlet burn such as one might pick up by grasping a red-hot poker. Moreover, his celluloid collar had been set to smoking, and might have burst into flames and burned his neck

if a stranger had not rushed up and quenched it with his handkerchief. The young doctors at the University Hospital, so it appeared, regarded Mr. Benson's escape alive as almost miraculous, and laid it to the fact that he had rubber heels on his shoes. Fortunately, their science was equal to the emergency, and they predicted that their patient would be as good as new, save for his burned hand, by morning. But they trembled to think of the possible fate of the next victim.

This story, which ran well beyond two sticks and rated a display head, saved the narcolept's job—but only temporarily. By ten o'clock the next morning more than 200 Baltimore merchants had called up the electric company and ordered the lights in front of their stores taken away at once. By noon the number was close to a thousand, and by 3 P.M. the lawyers of the electric company were closeted with Nachman, the business manager of the *Herald*, and his veins were running ice-water at their notice of a libel suit for \$500,000. They were ready to prove in court, they said, that it was as impossible to get a shock from one of their lights as from a child's rattle. The whole apparatus was fool, drunk, boy, idiot, suicide, and even giraffe proof. It had been tested by every expert in the nation, and pronounced perfect.

What became of the poor fish no one ever learned, for he got wind of the uproar before coming to the office the next day, and in fact never came at all, but vanished into space. The check-up that went on, with half the staff thrown into it, produced only misery of a very high voltage. The cops knew nothing of any such accident, the doctors at the University Hospital had no record of it, and the only William T. Benson who could be found in Washington had not been in Baltimore for nine years. Nor was there any lifting of the gloom when the *Herald's* own lawyer was consulted. This gentleman (he afterward reached the eminence of a Federal circuit judge) was one of those old-fashioned attorneys who saw every case as lost, and liked to wring their clients' hearts. If the *Herald* went into court, he said, he would have to stand mute, for there was no conceivable defense, and if it offered a compromise the electric company would be insane to take anything less than \$499,999.99. The most that could be hoped for was that a couple of implacable utilities-

haters would sneak past the company's fixers and get on the jury, and there scale down the damages to something less brutal—say \$250,000 or \$300,000.

During the month following the *Herald* printed twenty or thirty news stories acknowledging and denouncing the fake, and at least a dozen editorials apologizing for it, but many of the merchants had become immovably convinced that what could be imagined might some day actually happen, so the revenues of the electric company continued depleted, and the bellowing of its lawyers broke all records. When the case was finally set down for an early trial every *Herald* man felt relieved, for it was clearly best to get the agony over, go through a receivership, and start anew. On the day before the day of fate there was really a kind of gaiety in the office. Once more it was raining dismally, but everyone was almost cheerful. That afternoon a man carrying a steel-rodded umbrella lifted it to clear another pedestrian's umbrella in West Baltimore street, and the ferrule touched the lower carbon-socket of one of the few surviving arc-lights. When the cops got him to hospital he was dead.

I tell the tale as it was told to me: it all happened before I joined the staff. My own talent for faking fell into abeyance after I left the City Hall, and especially after I became city editor. In that office, in fact, I spent a large part of my energy trying to stamp it out in other men. But after I was promoted to managing editor, it enjoyed a curious recrudescence, and my masterpiece of all time, with the sole exception of my bogus history of the bathtub, printed in the *New York Evening Mail* on December 28, 1917, was a synthetic war dispatch printed in the *Herald* on May 30, 1905. The war that it had to do with was the gory bout between Japan and Russia, and its special theme was the Battle of Tsushima or Korea Straits, fought on May 27 and 28. Every managing editor on earth knew for weeks in advance that a great naval battle was impending, and nearly all of them had a pretty accurate notion of where it would be fought. Moreover, they all began to get bulletins, on May 27, indicating that it was on, and these bulletins were followed by others on the day following. They came from Shanghai, Hongkong, Foochow and all the other ports of the China coast. They were set in large type and printed under what were then called stud-horse heads, but they really

offered nothing better than rumors of rumors. Everyone knew that a battle was being fought, and everyone assumed that the Japanese would win, but no one had anything further to say on the subject. The Japs kept mum, and so did the Russians.

Like any other managing editor of normal appetites I was thrown into a sweat by this uncertainty. With the able aid of George Worsham, who was then news editor of the *Herald*, I had assembled a great array of cuts and follow stuff to adorn the story when it came, and though the *Herald* had changed to an evening paper by that time, he and I remained at our posts until late in the evenings of May 27 and 28, hoping against hope that the story would begin to flow at any minute, and give us a chance to bring out a hot extra. But nothing came in, and neither did anything come in on May 29—that is, nothing save more of the brief and tantalizing bulletins from the China coast. On the evening of this third day of waiting and lathering I retired to my cubby-hole of an office—and wrote the story in detail. The date-line I put on it was the plausible one of Seoul, and this is how it began:

From Chinese boatmen landing upon the Korean coast comes the first connected story of the great naval battle in the Straits of Korea on Saturday and Sunday.

After that I laid it on, as they used to say in those days, with a shovel. Worsham read copy on me, and contributed many illuminating details. Both of us, by hard poring over maps, had accumulated a knowledge of the terrain that was almost fit to be put beside that of a China coast pilot, and both of us had by heart the names of all the craft in both fleets, along with the names of their commanders. Worsham and I worked on the story until midnight, and the next morning we had it set in time for our noon edition. It began on Page 1 under a head like a fire-alarm, jumped double-led to Page 2, and there filled two and three-quarters columns. It described in throbbing phrases the arrival of the Russians, the onslaught of the Japs, the smoke and roar of the encounter, and then the gradual rolling up of the Jap victory. No one really knew, as yet, which side had won, but we took that chance. And to give verisimilitude to our otherwise bald and unconvincing narrative, we mentioned every ship by

name, and described its fate, sending most of the Russians to the bottom and leaving the field to Admiral Count Heihachiro Togo. With it we printed our largest, latest and most fierce portrait of the admiral, a smaller one of his unhappy antagonist, Admiral Ziniv Petrovitch Rozhdestvensky, and a whole series of pictures of the contending ships, with all the Russian marked either "damaged" or "sunk."

Thus the *Evening Herald* scored a beat on the world, and, what is more, a beat that lasted for nearly two weeks, for it took that long for any authentic details of the battle to reach civilization. By that time, alas, our feat was forgotten—but not by its perpetrators. Worsham and I searched the cables from Tokyo, when they began to come in at last, with sharp eyes, for we lived in fear that we might have pulled some very sour ones. But there were no such sour ones. We had guessed precisely right in every particular of the slightest importance, and on many fine points we had even beaten the Japs themselves. Years later, reading an astonishing vivid first-hand account of the battle by an actual participant, Aleksei Silych Novikov,* I was gratified to note that we were still right.

* Translated as Tsushima; New York, 1937.

Old Country Advice to the American Traveler

ONE year my uncle Melik traveled from Fresno to New York. Before he got aboard the train his uncle Garro paid him a visit and told him about the dangers of travel.

When you get on the train, the old man said, choose your seat carefully, sit down, and do not look about.

Yes, sir, my uncle said.

Several moments after the train begins to move, the old man said, two men wearing uniforms will come down the aisle and ask you for your ticket. Ignore them. They will be impostors.

How will I know? my uncle said.

You will know, the old man said. You are no longer a child.

Yes, sir, my uncle said.

Before you have traveled twenty miles an amiable young man will come to you and offer you a cigarette. Tell him you don't smoke. The cigarette will be doped.

Yes, sir, said my uncle.

On your way to the diner a very beautiful young woman will bump into you intentionally and almost embrace you, the old man said. She will be extremely apologetic and attractive, and your natural impulse will be to cultivate her friendship. Dismiss your natural impulse and go on in and cat. The woman will be an adventuress.

A what? my uncle said.

From *My Name Is Aram*, by William Saroyan; copyright 1940 by the author. Reprinted by permission of Harcourt, Brace and Company, Inc.

A whore, the old man shouted. Go on in and eat. Order the best food, and if the diner is crowded, and the beautiful young woman sits across the table from you, do not look into her eyes. If she speaks, pretend to be deaf.

Yes, sir, my uncle said.

Pretend to be deaf, the old man said. That is the only way out of it.

Out of what? my uncle said.

Out of the whole ungodly mess, the old man said. I have traveled. I know what I'm talking about.

Yes, sir, my uncle said.

Let's say no more about it, the old man said.

Yes, sir, my uncle said.

Let's not speak of the matter again, the old man said. It's finished. I have seven children. My life has been a full and righteous one. Let's not give it another thought. I have land, vines, trees, cattle, and money. One cannot have everything—except for a day or two at a time.

Yes, sir, my uncle said.

On your way back to your seat from the diner, the old man said, you will pass through the smoker. There you will find a game of cards in progress. The players will be three middle-aged men with expensive-looking rings on their fingers. They will nod at you pleasantly and one of them will invite you to join the game. Tell them, No speak English.

Yes, sir, my uncle said.

That is all, the old man said.

Thank you very much, my uncle said.

One thing more, the old man said. When you go to bed at night, take your money out of your pocket and put it in your shoe. Put your shoe under your pillow, keep your head on the pillow all night, *and don't sleep*.

Yes, sir, my uncle said.

That is all, the old man said.

The old man went away and the next day my uncle Melik got aboard the train and traveled straight across America to New York. The two men in uniforms were not impostors, the young man with the doped cigarette did not arrive, the beautiful young

woman did not sit across the table from my uncle in the diner, and there was no card game in progress in the smoker. My uncle put his money in his shoe and put his shoe under his pillow and put his head on the pillow and didn't sleep all night the first night, but the second night he abandoned the whole ritual.

The second day he *himself* offered another young man a cigarette which the other young man accepted. In the diner my uncle went out of his way to sit at a table with a young lady. He started a poker game in the smoker, and long before the train ever got to New York my uncle knew everybody aboard the train and everybody knew him. Once, while the train was traveling through Ohio, my uncle and the young man who had accepted the cigarette and two young ladies on their way to Vassar formed a quartette and sang *The Wabash Blues*.

The journey was a very pleasant one.

When my uncle Melik came back from New York, his old uncle Garro visited him again.

I see you are looking all right, he said. Did you follow my instructions?

Yes, sir, my uncle said.

The old man looked far away in space.

I am pleased that *someone* has profited by my experience, he said.

Daddy Dear

ALTHOUGH the picture starring a child actress had been shown in New York at various theatres for almost a year, Judy Graves didn't see it until it reached the small playhouse in her own neighborhood. It was about the hysterical devotion of a curly-haired little girl for her father, a whimsical Englishman who had been lost in the shuffle during the Boer War and had been found again through the untiring efforts of his little daughter and the dignified acquiescence of Queen Victoria. Judy attended the heartbreaking performance on a Saturday afternoon with her best friend, Fuffy Adams, who thought the whole thing bilge and said so. Fuffy was almost thirteen, five months older than Judy, and the years had taken their toll. Judy walked up the aisle of the theatre behind her friend, so that she could compose herself before being exposed to the daylight.

In the lobby, Fuffy turned to her. "I'm gagging," she said.

"Me, too." Judy drew in her breath and swallowed the lump in her throat.

"Did you ever," Fuffy asked, "see anything so absolutely *saccharine*?"

"Revolting," Judy answered. The memory of the child star danced before her eyes; she could see her brave little smile, the blind faith that shone in her face, the cunning way she saluted her father, a soldier of the Queen; Judy could also see her

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enchancing dresses with their dainty ruffles and the touching mannerisms that softened the heart of every male in the cast.

The two girls left the theatre and walked toward the drug-store on the corner. Fuffy scuffed her feet on the sidewalk in disgust. "The little stinker certainly made a monkey of her old man," she commented.

This was too much for Judy. "Really, Fuff," she said, "you shouldn't be so sophisticated. After all, things were different in the olden days. I must say you act awfully hardboiled sometimes."

Fuffy tilted her beret, which bore the emblem of the Carlton School on it, down over one eye. "Well, my old man's a right guy, but if I acted that way around him, he'd slough me."

They hoisted themselves up on the stools in front of the soda counter. They were tall for their twelve years and substantially built. "Make mine a double vanilla with hot fudge," Judy told the man.

"Ditto," Fuffy ordered.

"And no whipped cream on mine," Judy added virtuously.

"I'll have the works."

Seeing that her reproof had sent Fuffy clean off, Judy spoke pacifically. "You've got to admit she acted like a good egg when they put her out of her lovely room at school and made her sleep in the garret."

"Well, yes."

"And she really did find her father, even when everyone thought he was dead."

"Granted," Fuffy said.

Judy took a large spoonful of ice cream. "My father was in the World War," she said thoughtfully, "but he wasn't lost that I know of. Think how you'd feel if we got into another war and your father had to go and was maybe lost somewhere."

"That would be kind of awful," Fuffy agreed.

"So you see how talking the way you do *sounds*," Judy persisted.

"O.K., you win," Fuffy said.

They walked out of the store happily, filled with a pleasing sense of impending disaster. At the entrance to the apartment

house where Fuffy lived, Judy gave her an affectionate squeeze. "Bye, now," she said.

"Be seeing you," Fuffy responded.

Freed from the chill of Fuffy's skepticism, Judy started toward home. She thought of the careless, almost indifferent way she treated her own father, and her heart melted for him. She remembered how Lois, her fifteen-year-old sister, bossed him, and when she considered the tenderness he had never had from his two daughters, she felt ashamed. Her eyes lighted with a fanatic resolve, and she turned over a new leaf. Elated over the prospect of a future in which she and her father wandered forever hand in hand, she began to skip. Her full cheeks bounced as her feet hit hard on the pavement, and passers-by, seeing her approach, gave her a clear path.

Her thoughts were so filled with a blurred image of her father, who had obligingly donned the uniform of a British officer, that it was rather startling to find him actually sitting in the living room reading a paper when she got home. She walked softly over to his chair and shook her head at him playfully. Her hair hung in a thick, straight line to her shoulders, and no soft curls bobbed about at the movement. "Good evening, Daddy dear," she said.

Mr. Graves lifted his eyes. "Oh, hello there, Lois—Judy," he answered.

She moved closer to him and sat down on the arm of the chair.

"Here, watch what you're doing," he said. He pulled his paper to one side.

"Aren't you home early, Daddy?" she asked.

"Look out now, Judy," he said. "You'll have the arm of the chair off in another minute."

"I've had *such* a lovely day, Daddy. I hope you have, too." She threw a solid little arm around his neck.

"Ouch!" he exclaimed. "Have a heart! Go play with Lois. She's around here somewhere."

"Daddy," she asked, "are you and Mommy going to stay home tonight?"

"Nope," he answered. "And that reminds me that I've got to dress."

He gave her a friendly whack. "Get up."

She pulled herself to her feet and shook her head at him again. "Will you come and say goodbye to me before you go?" In her own mind she was already lying in a small bed in a frilly, old-fashioned nightgown, lifting up her arms for a good-night kiss.

"What do you keep shaking your head for?" he demanded. "Have you got something in your ear?"

For a minute she looked at him scornfully. "No," she said. It was an effort to skip toward the door and turn to blow him a kiss.

Mr. Graves walked slowly into the bedroom he shared with his wife. His voice, when he spoke to her, was puzzled. "Listen, Grace, what's got into Judy?"

"Judy?" Mrs. Graves repeated, as though the name were foreign to her.

"Yes," he said. "She acts funny. Nothing you can put your finger on, but just funny."

"You'd better hurry and get dressed or we'll be late," Mrs. Graves told him.

Judy was waiting in the living room when they were ready to leave. She had changed from the sweater and skirt she had been wearing into a last summer's dress of red-and-white dotted swiss with cherry-colored ribbons. It was limp from hanging in the closet and she had had trouble tying the bows, but it had a ruffle around the bottom of the skirt. When she saw her father, she sprang toward him with such enthusiasm that she almost threw him. "How *nice* you look!" she cried.

"Judy!" Mrs. Graves said sternly. "How many times have I told you not to make fun of your father. It's time you girls showed him a little respect."

"Make *fun* of him," Judy repeated in amazement.

"I think he looks very nice," Mrs. Graves said. "Now, say good night to him and tell Lois ten-thirty and *no later*. And nine-thirty for you."

She leaned toward Judy and kissed her lightly on the cheek.

Judy caught at her father's arm. "Daddy dear, what are you going to do tomorrow?"

"I'm going to sleep, for one thing."

"All day?"

"All day," he said positively.

"If you should happen to wake up, we might go to the Park." Her dark eyes, as she looked at him, were pleading, and he felt flattered and uncomfortable.

"We'll see," he told her.

Going down in the elevator, Mrs. Graves turned to him. "I think Judy was trying to make amends for poking fun at you," she said. "And I don't think it would hurt you to take her to the Park."

"Tomorrow," Mr. Graves said, "is another day."

The next morning, which was Sunday, Mr. Graves awoke earlier than he had hoped. It was a bright, cold day, and the sun seemed to shine on him reproachfully as he sat in the big chair by the window after breakfast. Judy had been sitting there when he came into the room and had got up to give him her place. Now she lay curled up on the couch across the room and every time he looked at her she gave him a quick, anxious smile.

"Pardon me for interrupting," she said at last, "but if this country goes into the war, would you have to go?"

"I hope not," he answered.

"Oh, I hope so, too. On the other hand, you couldn't very well *not* go, could you? I mean if your regiment went."

"What are you talking about?" he asked crossly. "I don't belong to any regiment."

"You did once."

"Well, *once* I did. And once was enough."

Judy, remembering the gallant way the English father had answered the call to colors, found it hard to answer, "You know best, Daddy dear."

Mr. Graves was conscious of her disapproval and spoke pleasantly. "What time is it?"

She turned her head to see the clock on the mantel. "Almost eleven," she answered.

He rose to his feet. "Well, how about that walk in the Park you promised me?"

"Oh, you *sweet* daddy!" Judy exclaimed. "Wait till I get my things and I'll be with you in a sec. I'll run quick, like a bunny."

Mr. Graves' face, as he took his coat and hat from the hall closet, was a picture.

Although it was very cold, the Park was filled with people; babies looking pink and stuffed sat in their carriages blinking in the sunlight, dogs strained at their leashes and seemed about to choke. Judy clung to her father's arm and skipped by his side.

"Too bad Lois couldn't come," he said. He was remembering the neat way Lois walked.

"Oh, *her*," Judy scoffed. "She went to church."

"That's a very lovely thing for Lois to do. You should have gone with her."

Judy squeezed his arm so hard that he winced. "I'd love to go to church, Daddy, if you would go with me. Shall we?"

"Someday," he said.

As they strolled, Judy talked. "It must be *too* marv to work downtown," she said. "But it must have seemed dull to you at first. I mean, *after*."

"After?"

"After the war. Tell me about the war."

During the next hour, Mr. Graves was thoroughly and not too artfully drawn out. It seemed to him that he had never noticed before how much Judy bounced as she walked or how clumsy she was on her feet. There were times when he was afraid she would fall flat on her face, and he warned her about it. "You'll land on your puss if you're not careful," he said.

They walked all the way around the reservoir. Mr. Graves' arm grew stiff with the weight of Judy's body as she swung on it. By the time they reached the Fifth Avenue exit, he felt as though his side must be worn raw where she had bumped against it. As they stood on the corner waiting for the lights to change, he shook her off. "Stop wiggling, for Christ's sake, and *light!*" he exclaimed. "And step on it, because I'd like to have time to snatch a drink before dinner."

Judy dropped his arm and they started across the street. She stopped skipping and her feet, in their brown oxfords, dragged heavily. It was not usual for her father to mix drinks before Sunday dinner, and the soldier-father in the picture certainly hadn't reached for a bottle after a brief session with his idolized little daughter. As she stumped along, keeping step with her own father, she decided that it was not easy to become the apple of

someone's eye. A wave of sadness swept over her, which was immediately followed by a stronger, more familiar sensation. It was a sensation that always made her yawn pleasantly.

Her father looked down at her and smiled. "Well, well," he said. "That must mean somebody's hungry."

One Perfect Rose

A single flow'r he sent me, since we met.
All tenderly his messenger he chose;
Deep-hearted, pure, with scented dew still wet—
One perfect rose.

I knew the language of the floweret;
"My fragile leaves," it said, "his heart enclose."
Love long has taken for his amulet
One perfect rose.

Why is it no one ever sent me yet
One perfect limousine, do you suppose?
Ah no, it's always just my luck to get
One perfect rose.

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You Were Perfectly Fine

THE pale young man eased himself carefully into the low chair, and rolled his head to the side, so that the cool chintz comforted his cheek and temple.

"Oh, dear," he said. "Oh, dear, oh, dear, oh, dear. Oh."

The clear-eyed girl, sitting light and erect on the couch, smiled brightly at him.

"Not feeling so well today?" she said.

"Oh, I'm great," he said. "Corking, I am. Know what time I got up? Four o'clock this afternoon, sharp. I kept trying to make it, and every time I took my head off the pillow, it would roll under the bed. This isn't my head I've got on now. I think this is something that used to belong to Walt Whitman. Oh, dear, oh, dear, oh, dear."

"Do you think maybe a drink would make you feel better?" she said.

"The hair of the mastiff that bit me?" he said. "Oh, no, thank you. Please never speak of anything like that again. I'm through. I'm all, all through. Look at that hand; steady as a humming-bird. Tell me, was I very terrible last night?"

"Oh, goodness," she said, "everybody was feeling pretty high. You were all right."

"Yeah," he said. "I must have been dandy. Is everybody sore at me?"

"Good heavens, no," she said. "Everyone thought you were terribly funny. Of course, Jim Pierson was a little stuffy, there for a minute at dinner. But people sort of held him back in his chair, and got him calmed down. I don't think anybody at the other tables noticed it at all. Hardly anybody."

"He was going to sock me?" he said. "Oh, Lord. What did I do to him?"

"Why, you didn't do a thing," she said. "You were perfectly fine. But you know how silly Jim gets, when he thinks anybody is making too much fuss over Elinor."

"Was I making a pass at Elinor?" he said. "Did I do that?"

"Of course you didn't," she said. "You were only fooling, that's all. She thought you were awfully amusing. She was having a marvelous time. She only got a little tiny bit annoyed just once, when you poured the clam-juice down her back."

"My God," he said. "Clam-juice down that back. And every vertebra a little Cabot. Dear God. What'll I ever do?"

"Oh, she'll be all right," she said. "Just send her some flowers, or something. Don't worry about it. It isn't anything."

"No, I won't worry," he said. "I haven't got a care in the world. I'm sitting pretty. Oh, dear, oh, dear. Did I do any other fascinating tricks at dinner?"

"You were fine," she said. "Don't be so foolish about it. Everybody was crazy about you. The maître d'hôtel was a little worried because you wouldn't stop singing, but he really didn't mind. All he said was, he was afraid they'd close the place again, if there was so much noise. But he didn't care a bit, himself. I think he loved seeing you have such a good time. Oh, you were just singing away, there, for about an hour. It wasn't so terribly loud, at all."

"So I sang," he said. "That must have been a treat. I sang."

"Don't you remember?" she said. "You just sang one song after another. Everybody in the place was listening. They loved it. Only you kept insisting that you wanted to sing some song about some kind of fusiliers or other, and everybody kept shushing you, and you'd keep trying to start it again. You were wonderful. We were all trying to make you stop singing for a minute, and eat something, but you wouldn't hear of it. My, you were funny."

"Didn't I eat any dinner?" he said.

"Oh, not a thing," she said. "Every time the waiter would offer you something, you'd give it right back to him, because you said that he was your long-lost brother, changed in the cradle by a gypsy band, and that anything you had was his. You had him simply roaring at you."

"I bet I did," he said. "I bet I was comical. Society's Pet, I must have been. And what happened then, after my overwhelming success with the waiter?"

"Why, nothing much," she said. "You took a sort of dislike to some old man with white hair, sitting across the room, because

you didn't like his necktie and you wanted to tell him about it. But we got you out, before he got really mad."

"Oh, we got out," he said. "Did I walk?"

"Walk! Of course you did," she said. "You were absolutely all right. There was that nasty stretch of ice on the sidewalk, and you did sit down awfully hard, you poor dear. But good heavens, that might have happened to anybody."

"Oh, surely," he said. "Mrs. Hoover or anybody. So I fell down on the sidewalk. That would explain what's the matter with my—Yes. I see. And then what, if you don't mind?"

"Ah, now, Peter!" she said. "You can't sit there and say you don't remember what happened after that! I did think that maybe you were just a little tight at dinner—oh, you were perfectly all right, and all that, but I did know you were feeling pretty gay. But you were so serious from the time you fell down—I never knew you to be that way. Don't you know, how you told me I had never seen your real self before? Oh, Peter, I just couldn't bear it, if you didn't remember that lovely long ride we took together in the taxi! Please, you do remember that, don't you? I think it would simply kill me, if you didn't."

"Oh, yes," he said. "Riding in the taxi. Oh, yes, sure. Pretty long ride, hmm?"

"Round and round and round the park," she said. "Oh, and the trees were shining so in the moonlight. And you said you never knew before that you really had a soul."

"Yes," he said. "I said that. That was me."

"You said such lovely, lovely things," she said. "And I'd never known, all this time, how you had been feeling about me, and I'd never dared to let you see how I felt about you. And then last night—oh, Peter dear, I think that taxi ride was the most important thing that ever happened to us in our lives."

"Yes," he said. "I guess it must have been."

"And we're going to be so happy," she said. "Oh, I just want to tell everybody! But I don't know—I think maybe it would be sweeter to keep it all to ourselves."

"I think it would be," he said.

"Isn't it lovely?" she said.

"Yes," he said. "Great."

"Lovely!" she said.

"Look here," he said, "do you mind if I have a drink? I mean, just medicinally, you know. I'm off the stuff for life, so help me. But I think I feel a collapse coming on."

"Oh, I think it would do you good," she said. "You poor boy, it's a shame you feel so awful. I'll go make you a highball."

"Honestly," he said, "I don't see how you could ever want to speak to me again, after I made such a fool of myself, last night. I think I'd better go join a monastery in Thibet."

"You crazy idiot!" she said. "As if I could ever let you go away now! Stop talking like that. You were perfectly fine."

She jumped up from the couch, kissed him quickly on the forehead, and ran out of the room.

The pale young man looked after her and shook his head long and slowly, then dropped it in his damp and trembling hands.

"Oh, dear," he said. "Oh, dear, oh, dear, oh, dear."

The Catbird Seat

MR. MARTIN bought the pack of Camels on Monday night in the most crowded cigar store on Broadway. It was theater time and seven or eight men were buying cigarettes. The clerk didn't even glance at Mr. Martin, who put the pack in his overcoat pocket and went out. If any of the staff at F & S had seen him buy the cigarettes, they would have been astonished, for it was generally known that Mr. Martin did not smoke, and never had. No one saw him.

It was just a week to the day since Mr. Martin had decided to rub out Mrs. Ulgine Barrows. The term "rub out" pleased him because it suggested nothing more than the correction of an error—in this case an error of Mr. Fitweiler. Mr. Martin had spent each night of the past week working out his plan and examining it. As he walked home now he went over it again. For the hundredth time he resented the element of imprecision, the margin of guesswork that entered into the business. The project as he had worked it out was casual and bold, the risks were considerable. Something might go wrong anywhere along the line. And therein lay the cunning of his scheme. No one would ever see in it the cautious, painstaking hand of Erwin Martin, head of the filing department at F & S, of whom Mr. Fitweiler had once said, "Man is fallible but Martin isn't." No one would see his hand, that is, unless it were caught in the act.

From *The Thurber Carnival*, by James Thurber; this selection copyright 1942 by the author.

Sitting in his apartment, drinking a glass of milk, Mr. Martin reviewed his case against Mrs. Ulgine Barrows, as he had every night for seven nights. He began at the beginning. Her quacking voice and braying laugh had first profaned the halls of F & S on March 7, 1941 (Mr. Martin had a head for dates). Old Roberts, the personnel chief, had introduced her as the newly appointed special adviser to the president of the firm, Mr. Fitweiler. The woman had appalled Mr. Martin instantly, but he hadn't shown it. He had given her his dry hand, a look of studious concentration, and a faint smile. "Well," she had said, looking at the papers on his desk, "are you lifting the oxcart out of the ditch?" As Mr. Martin recalled that moment, over his milk, he squirmed slightly. He must keep his mind on her crimes as a special adviser, not on her peccadillos as a personality. This he found difficult to do, in spite of entering an objection and sustaining it. The faults of the woman as a woman kept chattering on in his mind like an unruly witness. She had, for almost two years now, baited him. In the halls, in the elevator, even in his own office, into which she romped now and then like a circus horse, she was constantly shouting these silly questions at him. "Are you lifting the oxcart out of the ditch? Are you tearing up the pea patch? Are you holering down the rain barrel? Are you scraping around the bottom of the pickle barrel? Are you sitting in the catbird seat?"

It was Joey Hart, one of Mr. Martin's two assistants, who had explained what the gibberish meant. "She must be a Dodger fan," he had said. "Red Barber announces the Dodger games over the radio and he uses those expressions—picked 'em up down South." Joey had gone on to explain one or two. "Tearing up the pea patch" meant going on a rampage; "sitting in the catbird seat" meant sitting pretty, like a batter with three balls and no strikes on him. Mr. Martin dismissed all this with an effort. It had been annoying, it had driven him near to distraction, but he was too solid a man to be moved to murder by anything so childish. It was fortunate, he reflected as he passed on to the important charges against Mrs. Barrows, that he had stood up under it so well. He had maintained always an outward appearance of polite tolerance. "Why, I even believe you like the woman," Miss Paired, his other assistant, had once said to him. He had simply smiled.

A gavel rapped in Mr. Martin's mind and the case proper

was resumed. Mrs. Ulguine Barrows stood charged with willful, blatant, and persistent attempts to destroy the efficiency and system of F & S. It was competent, material, and relevant to review her advent and rise to power. Mr. Martin had got the story from Miss Paired, who seemed always able to find things out. According to her, Mrs. Barrows had met Mr. Fitweiler at a party, where she had rescued him from the embraces of a powerfully built drunken man who had mistaken the president of F & S for a famous retired Middle Western football coach. She had led him to a sofa and somehow worked upon him a monstrous magic. The aging gentleman had jumped to the conclusion there and then that this was a woman of singular attainments, equipped to bring out the best in him and in the firm. A week later he had introduced her into F & S as his special adviser. On that day confusion got its foot in the door. After Miss Tyson, Mr. Brundage, and Mr. Bartlett had been fired and Mr. Munson had taken his hat and stalked out, mailing in his resignation later, old Roberts had been emboldened to speak to Mr. Fitweiler. He mentioned that Mr. Munson's department had been "a little disrupted" and hadn't they perhaps better resume the old system there? Mr. Fitweiler had said certainly not. He had the greatest faith in Mrs. Barrow's ideas. "They require a little seasoning, a little seasoning, is all," he had added. Mr. Roberts had given it up, Mr. Martin reviewed in detail all the changes wrought by Mrs. Barrows. She had begun chipping at the cornices of the firm's edifice and now she was swinging at the foundation stones with a pickaxe.

Mr. Martin came now, in his summing up, to the afternoon of Monday, November 2, 1942—just one week ago. On that day at 3 P. M., Mrs. Barrows had bounced into his office. "Bool!" she had yelled. "Are you scraping around the bottom of the pickle barrel?" Mr. Martin had looked at her from under his green eyeshade, saying nothing. She had begun to wander about the office, taking it in with her great, popping eyes. "Do you really need *all* these filing cabinets?" she had demanded suddenly. Mr. Martin's heart had jumped. "Each of these files," he had said, keeping his voice even, "plays an indispensable part in the system of F & S." She had brayed at him; "Well, don't tear up the pea patch!" and gone to the door. From there she had bawled, "But

you sure have got a lot of fine scrap in here!" Mr. Martin could no longer doubt that the finger was on his beloved department. Her pickaxe was on the upswing, poised for the first blow. It had not come yet; he had received no blue memo from the enchanted Mr. Fitweiler bearing nonsensical instructions deriving from the obscene woman. But there was no doubt in Mr. Martin's mind that one would be forthcoming. He must act quickly. Already a precious week had gone by. Mr. Martin stood up in his living room, still holding his milk glass. "Gentlemen of the jury," he said to himself, "I demand the death penalty for this horrible person."

The next day Mr. Martin followed his routine, as usual. He polished his glasses more often and once sharpened an already sharp pencil, but not even Miss Paired noticed. Only once did he catch sight of his victim; she swept past him in the hall with a patronizing "Hi!" At five-thirty he walked home, as usual, and had a glass of milk, as usual. He had never drunk anything stronger in his life—unless you could count ginger ale. The late Sam Schlosser, the S of F & S, had praised Mr. Martin at a staff meeting several years before for his temperate habits. "Our more efficient worker neither drinks nor smokes," he had said. "The results speak for themselves." Mr. Fitweiler had sat by, nodding approval.

Mr. Martin was still thinking about that red-letter day as he walked over to the Schrafft's on Fifth Avenue near Forty-sixth Street. He got there, as he always did, at eight o'clock. He finished his dinner and the financial page of the *Sun* at a quarter to nine, as he always did. It was his custom after dinner to take a walk. This time he walked down Fifth Avenue at a casual pace. His gloved hands felt moist and warm, his forehead cold. He transferred the Camels from his overcoat to a jacket pocket. He wondered, as he did so, if they did not represent an unnecessary note of strain. Mrs. Barrows smoked only Luckies. It was his idea to puff a few puffs on a Camel (after the rubbing-out), stub it out in the ashtray holding her lipstick-stained Luckies, and thus drag a small red herring across the trail. Perhaps it was not a good idea. It would take time. He might even choke, too loudly.

Mr. Martin had never seen the house on West Twelfth Street

where Mrs. Barrows lived, but he had a clear enough picture of it. Fortunately, she had bragged to everybody about her ducky first-floor apartment in the perfectly darling three-story red-brick. There would be no doorman or other attendants; just the tenants of the second and third floors. As he walked along, Mr. Martin realized that he would get there before nine-thirty. He had considered walking north on Fifth Avenue from Schrafft's to a point from which it would take him until ten o'clock to reach the house. At that hour people were less likely to be coming in or going out. But the procedure would have made an awkward loop in the straight thread of his casualness, and he had abandoned it. It was impossible to figure when people would be entering or leaving the house, anyway. There was a great risk at any hour. If he ran into anybody, he would simply have to place the rubbing-out of Ulgine Barrows in the inactive file forever. The same thing would hold true if there were someone in her apartment. In that case he would just say that he had been passing by, recognized her charming house and thought to drop in.

It was eighteen minutes after nine when Mr. Martin turned into Twelfth Street. A man passed him, and a man and a woman talking. There was no one within fifty paces when he came to the house, halfway down the block. He was up the steps and in the small vestibule in no time, pressing the bell under the card that said "Mrs. Ulgine Barrows." When the clicking in the lock started, he jumped forward against the door. He got inside fast, closing the door behind him. A bulb in a lantern hung from the hall ceiling on a chain seemed to give a monstrously bright light. There was nobody on the stair, which went up ahead of him along the left wall. A door opened down the hall in the wall on the right. He went toward it swiftly, on tiptoe.

"Well, for God's sake, look who's here!" bawled Mrs. Barrows, and her braying laugh rang out like the report of a shotgun. He rushed past her like a football tackle, bumping her. "Hey, quit shoving!" she said, closing the door behind them. They were in her living room, which seemed to Mr. Martin to be lighted by a hundred lamps. "What's after you?" she said. "You're as jumpy as a goat." He found he was unable to speak. His heart was wheezing in his throat. "I—yes," he finally brought out. She was

jabbering and laughing as she started to help him off with his coat. "No, no," he said. "I'll put it here." He took it off and put it on a chair near the door. "Your hat and gloves, too," she said. "You're in a lady's house." He put his hat on top of the coat. Mrs. Barrows seemed larger than he had thought. He kept his gloves on. "I was passing by," he said. "I recognized—is there anyone here?" She laughed louder than ever. "No," she said, "we're all alone. You're as white as a sheet, you funny man. Whatever *has* come over you? I'll mix you a toddy." She started toward a door across the room. "Scotch-and-soda be all right? But say, you don't drink, do you?" She turned and gave him her amused look. Mr. Martin pulled himself together. "Scotch-and-soda will be all right," he heard himself say. He could hear her laughing in the kitchen.

Mr. Martin looked quickly around the living room for the weapon. He had counted on finding one there. There were and-irons and a poker and something in a corner that looked like an Indian club. None of them would do. It couldn't be that way. He began to pace around. He came to a desk. On it lay a metal paper knife with an ornate handle. Would it be sharp enough? He reached for it and knocked over a small brass jar. Stamps spilled out of it and it fell to the floor with a clatter. "Hey," Mrs. Barrows yelled from the kitchen, "are you tearing up the pea patch?" Mr. Martin gave a strange laugh. Picking up the knife, he tried its point against his left wrist. It was blunt. It wouldn't do.

When Mrs. Barrows reappeared, carrying two highballs, Mr. Martin, standing there with his gloves on, became acutely conscious of the fantasy he had wrought. Cigarettes in his pocket, a drink prepared for him—it was all too grossly improbable. It was more than that; it was impossible. Somewhere in the back of his mind a vague idea stirred, sprouted. "I always wear them in the house," said Mr. Martin. The idea began to bloom, strange and wonderful. She put the glasses on a coffee table in front of a sofa and sat on the sofa. "Come over here, you odd little man," she said. Mr. Martin went over and sat beside her. It was difficult getting a cigarette out of the pack of Camels, but he managed it.

She held a match for him, laughing. "Well," she said, handing him his drink, "this is perfectly marvelous. You with a drink and a cigarette."

Mr. Martin puffed, not too awkwardly, and took a gulp of the highball. "I drink and smoke all the time," he said. He clinked his glass against hers. "Here's nuts to that old windbag, Fitweiler," he said, and gulped again. The stuff tasted awful, but he made no grimace. "Really, Mr. Martin," she said, her voice and posture changing, "you are insulting our employer." Mrs. Barrows was now all special adviser to the president. "I am preparing a bomb," said Mr. Martin, "which will blow the old goat higher than hell." He had only had a little of the drink, which was not strong. It couldn't be that. "Do you take dope or something?" Mrs. Barrows asked coldly. "Heroin," said Mr. Martin. "I'll be coked to the gills when I bump that old buzzard off." "Mr. Martin!" she shouted, getting to her feet. "That will be all of that. You must go at once." Mr. Martin took another swallow of his drink. He tapped his cigarette out in the ashtray and put the pack of Camels on the coffee table. Then he got up. She stood glaring at him. He walked over and put on his hat and coat. "Not a word about this," he said, and laid an index finger against his lips. All Mrs. Barrows could bring out was "Really!" Mr. Martin put his hand on the doorknob. "I'm sitting in the catbird seat," he said. He stuck his tongue out at her and left. Nobody saw him go.

Mr. Martin got to his apartment, walking, well before eleven. No one saw him go in. He had two glasses of milk after brushing his teeth, and he felt elated. It wasn't tipsiness, because he hadn't been tipsy. Anyway, the walk had worn off all effects of the whisky. He got in bed and read a magazine for a while. He was asleep before midnight.

Mr. Martin got to the office at eight-thirty the next morning, as usual. At a quarter to nine, Ulgine Barrows, who had never before arrived at work before ten, swept into his office. "I'm reporting to Mr. Fitweiler now!" she shouted. "If he turns you over to the police, it's no more than you deserve!" Mr. Martin gave her a look of shocked surprise. "I beg your pardon?" he said. Mrs. Barrows snorted and bounced out of the room, leaving

Miss Paired and Joey Hart staring after her. "What's the matter with that old devil now?" asked Miss Paired. "I have no idea," said Mr. Martin, resuming his work. The other two looked at him and then at each other. Miss Paired got up and went out. She walked slowly past the closed door of Mr. Fitweiler's office. Mrs. Barrows was yelling inside, but she was not braying. Miss Paired could not hear what the woman was saying. She went back to her desk.

Forty-five minutes later, Mrs. Barrows left the president's office and went into her own, shutting the door. It wasn't until half an hour later that Mr. Fitweiler sent for Mr. Martin. The head of the filing department, neat, quiet, attentive, stood in front of the old man's desk. Mr. Fitweiler was pale and nervous. He took his glasses off and twiddled them. He made a small, bruffing sound in his throat. "Martin," he said, "you have been with us more than twenty years." "Twenty-two, sir," said Mr. Martin. "In that time," pursued the president, "your work and your—uh—manner have been exemplary." "I trust so, sir," said Mr. Martin. "I have understood, Martin," said Mr. Fitweiler, "that you have never taken a drink or smoked." "That is correct, sir," said Mr. Martin. "Ah, yes." Mr. Fitweiler polished his glasses. "You may describe what you did after leaving the office yesterday, Martin," he said. Mr. Martin allowed less than a second for his bewildered pause. "Certainly, sir," he said. "I walked home. Then I went to Schrafft's for dinner. Afterward I walked home again. I went to bed early, sir, and read a magazine for a while. I was asleep before eleven." "Ah, yes," said Mr. Fitweiler again. He was silent for a moment, searching for the proper words to say to the head of the filing department. "Mrs. Barrows has worked hard, Martin, very hard. It grieves me to report that she has suffered a severe breakdown. It has taken the form of a persecution complex accompanied by distressing hallucinations." "I am very sorry, sir," said Mr. Martin. "Mrs. Barrows is under the delusion," continued Mr. Fitweiler, "that you visited her last evening and behaved yourself in an—uh—unseemly manner." He raised his hand to silence Mr. Martin's little pained outcry. "It is the nature of these psychological diseases," Mr. Fitweiler said, "to fix upon the least likely and most innocent party as the—uh—source of persecution. These matters are not for the lay mind to grasp,

Martin. I've just had my psychiatrist, Dr. Fitch, on the phone. He would not, of course, commit himself, but he made enough generalizations to substantiate my suspicions. I suggested to Mrs. Barrows when she had completed her—uh—story to me this morning, that she visit Dr. Fitch, for I suspected a condition at once. She flew, I regret to say, into a rage, and demanded—uh—requested that I call you on the carpet. You may not know, Martin, but Mrs. Barrows had planned a reorganization of your department—subject to my approval, of course, subject to my approval. This brought you, rather than anyone else to her mind—but again that is a phenomenon for Dr. Fitch and not for us. So, Martin, I am afraid Mrs. Barrows' usefulness here is at an end." "I am dreadfully sorry, sir," said Mr. Martin.

It was at this point that the door to the office blew open with the suddenness of a gas-main explosion and Mrs. Barrows catapulted through it. "Is the little rat denying it?" she screamed. "He can't get away with that!" Mr. Martin got up and moved discreetly to a point beside Mr. Fitweiler's chair. "You drank and smoked at my apartment," she bawled at Mr. Martin, "and you know it! You called Mr. Fitweiler an old windbag and said you were going to blow him up when you got coked to the gills on your heroin!" She stopped yelling to catch her breath and a new glint came into her popping eyes. "If you weren't such a drab, ordinary little man," she said, "I'd think you'd planned it all. Sticking your tongue out, saying you were sitting in the catbird seat, because you thought no one would believe me when I told it! My God, it's really too perfect!" She brayed loudly and hysterically, and the fury was on her again. She glared at Mr. Fitweiler. "Can't you see how he has tricked us, you old fool? Can't you see his little game?" But Mr. Fitweiler had been surreptitiously pressing all the buttons under the top of his desk and employees of F & S began pouring into the room. "Stockton," said Mr. Fitweiler, "you and Fishbein will take Mrs. Barrows to her home. Mrs. Powell, you will go with them." Stockton, who had played a little football in high school, blocked Mrs. Barrows as she made for Mr. Martin. It took him and Fishbein together to force her out of the door into the hall, crowded with stenographers and office boys. She was still screaming imprecations at Mr. Martin, tangled and contradictory

imprecations. The hubbub finally died out down the corridor.

"I regret that this has happened," said Mr. Fitweiler. "I shall ask you to dismiss it from your mind, Martin." "Yes, sir," said Mr. Martin, anticipating his chief's "That will be all" by moving to the door. "I will dismiss it." He went out and shut the door, and his step was light and quick in the hall. When he entered his department he had slowed down to his customary gait, and he walked quietly across the room to the W20 file, wearing a look of studious concentration.

Mr. and Mrs. Fix-It

THEY'RE certainly a live bunch in this town. We ain't only been here three days and had calls already from people representin' four different organizations—the Chamber of Commerce, Kiwanis, and I forget who else. They wanted to know if we was comfortable and did we like the town and is they anything they can do for us and what to be sure and sec.

And they all asked how we happened to come here instead of goin' somewheres else. I guess they keep a record of everybody's reasons for comin' so as they can get a line of what features tourists is most attracted by. Then they play up them features in next year's booster advertisin'.

Well, I told them we was perfectly comfortable and we like the town fine and they's nothin' nobody can do for us right now and we'll be sure and see all the things we ought to see. But when they asked me how did we happen to come here, I said it was just a kind of a accident, because the real reason makes too long a story.

My wife has been kiddin' me about my friends ever since we was married. She says that judgin' by the ones I've introduced her to, they ain't nobody in the world got a rummier bunch of friends than me. I'll admit that the most of them ain't, well, what you might call hot; they're different somehow than when I first hung around with them. They seem to be lost without a brass

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rail to rest their dogs on. But of course they're old friends and I can't give 'em the air.

We have 'em to the house for dinner every little w'ile, they and their wives, and what my missus objects to is because they don't none of them play bridge or mah jong or do cross-word puzzles or sing or dance or even talk, but just set there and wait for somebody to pour 'em a fresh drink.

As I say, my wife kids me about 'em and they ain't really nothin' I can offer in their defense. That don't mean, though, that the shoe is all on one foot. Because w'ile the majority of her friends may not be quite as dumb as mine, just the same they's a few she's picked out who I'd of had to be under the ether to allow anybody to introduce 'em to me in the first place.

Like the Crandalls, for instance. Mrs. Crandall come from my wife's home town and they didn't hardly know each other there, but they met again in a store in Chi and it went from bad to worse till finally Ada asked the dame and her husband to the house.

Well, the husband turns out to be the fella that win the war, w'ile it seems that Mrs. Crandall was in Atlantic City once and some movin' picture company was makin' a picture there and they took a scene of what was supposed to be society people walkin' up and down the Boardwalk and Mrs. Crandall was in the picture and people that seen it when it come out, they all said that from the way she screened, why if she wanted to go into the business, she could make Gloria Swanson look like Mrs. Gump.

Now it ain't only took me a few words to tell you these things, but when the Crandalls tells their story themselves, they don't hardly get started by midnight and no chance of them goin' home till they're through even when you drop 'em a hint that they're springin' it on you for the hundred and twelfth time.

That's the Crandalls, and another of the wife's friends is the Thayers. Thayer is what you might call a all-around handy man. He can mimic pretty near all the birds and beasts and fishes, he can yodel, he can play a ocarena, or he can recite Kipling or Robert H. Service, or he can do card tricks, and strike a light without no matches, and tie all the different knots.

And besides that, he can make a complete radio outfit and set

it up, and take pictures as good as the best professional photographers and a whole lot better. He collects autographs. And he never had a sick day in his life.

Mrs. Thayer gets a headache playin' bridge, so it's mah jong or rhum when she's around. She used to be a teacher of elocution and she still gives readin's if you coax her, or if you don't, and her hair is such a awful nuisance that she would get it cut in a minute only all her friends tells her it would be criminal to spoil that head of hair. And when she talks to her husband, she always talks baby talk, maybe because somebody has told her that she'd be single if he wasn't childish.

And then Ada has got still another pal, a dame named Peggy Flood who is hospital mad and ain't happy unless she is just goin' under the knife or just been there. She's had everything removed that the doctors knew the name of and now they're probin' her for new giblets.

Well, I wouldn't mind if they cut her up into alphabet soup if they'd only do such a good job of it that they couldn't put her together again, but she always comes through O.K. and she spends the intermission at our place, describin' what all they done or what they're plannin' to do next.

But the cat's nightgown is Tom Stevens and his wife. There's the team that wins the Olympics! And they're Ada's team, not mine.

Ada met Belle Stevens on the elevated. Ada was invited to a party out on the North Side and didn't know exactly where to get off and Mrs. Stevens seen her talkin' to the guard and horned in and asked her what was it she wanted to know and Ada told her, and Mrs. Stevens said she was goin' to get off the same station Ada wanted to get off, so they got off together.

Mrs. Stevens insisted on goin' right along to the address where Ada was goin' because she said Ada was bound to get lost if she wasn't familiar with the neighborhood.

Well, Ada thought it was mighty nice of her to do so much for a stranger. Mrs. Stevens said she was glad to because she didn't know what would happen to her lots of times if strangers hadn't been nice and helped her out.

She asked Ada where she lived and Ada told her on the South Side and Mrs. Stevens said she was sure we'd like it better on

the North Side if we'd leave her pick out a place for us, so Ada told her we had a year's lease that we had just signed and couldn't break it, so then Mrs. Stevens said her husband had studied law and he claimed they wasn't no lease that you couldn't break and some evening she would bring him out to call on us and he'd tell us how to break our lease.

Well, Ada had to say sure, come on out, though we was perfectly satisfied with our apartment and didn't no more want to break the lease than each other's jaw. Maybe not as much. Anyway, the very next night, they showed up, Belle and Tom, and when they'd gone, I give 'em the nickname—Mr. and Mrs. Fix-It.

After the introductions, Stevens made some remark about what a cozy little place we had and then he asked if I would mind tellin' what rent we paid. So I told him a hundred and a quarter a month. So he said, of course, that was too much and no wonder we wanted to break the lease. Then I said we was satisfied and didn't want to break it and he said I must be kiddin' and if I would show him the lease he would see what loopholes they was in it.

Well, the lease was right there in a drawer in the table, but I told him it was in my safety deposit box at the bank. I ain't got no safety deposit box and no more use for one than Judge Landis has for the deaf and dumb alphabet.

Stevens said the lease was probably just a regular lease and if it was, they wouldn't be no trouble gettin' out of it, and meanw'ile him and his wife would see if they couldn't find us a place in the same buildin' with them.

And he was pretty sure they could even if the owner had to give some other tenant the air, because he, the owner, would do anything in the world for Stevens.

So I said yes, but suppose we want to stay where we are. So he said I looked like a man with better judgment than that and if I would just leave everything to him he would fix it so's we could move within a month. I kind of laughed and thought that would be the end of it.

He wanted to see the whole apartment so I showed him around and when we come to the bathroom he noticed my safety razor on the shelf. He said, "So you use one of them things," and I said, "Yes," and he asked me how I liked it, and I said I liked

it fine and he said that must be because I hadn't never used a regular razor.

He said a regular razor was the only thing to use if a man wanted to look good. So I asked him if he used a regular razor and he said he did, so I said, "Well, if you look good, I don't want to."

But that didn't stop him and he said if I would meet him downtown the next day he would take me to the place where he bought all his razors and help me pick some out for myself. I told him I was goin' to be tied up, so just to give me the name and address of the place and I would drop in there when I had time.

But, no, that wouldn't do; he'd have to go along with me and introduce me to the proprietor because the proprietor was a great pal of his and would do anything in the world for him, and if the proprietor vouched for the razors, I could be sure I was gettin' the best razors money could buy. I told him again that I was goin' to be tied up and I managed to get him on some other subject.

Meanw'ile, Mrs. Stevens wanted to know where Ada had bought the dress she was wearin' and how much had it cost and Ada told her and Mrs. Stevens said it was a crime. She would meet Ada downtown tomorrow morning and take her to the shop where she bought her clothes and help her choose some dresses that really was dresses.

So Ada told her she didn't have no money to spend on dresses right then, and besides, the shop Mrs. Stevens mentioned was too high priced. But it seems the dame that run the shop was just like a sister to Mrs. Stevens and give her and her friends a big reduction and not only that, but they wasn't no hurry about payin'.

Well, Ada thanked her just the same, but didn't need nothin' new just at present; maybe later on she would take advantage of Mrs. Stevens's kind offer. Yes, but right now they was some models in stock that would be just beautiful on Ada and they might be gone later on. They was nothin' for it but Ada had to make a date with her; she wasn't obliged to buy nothin', but it would be silly not to go and look at the stuff that was in the joint and get acquainted with the dame that run it.

Well, Ada kept the date and bought three dresses she didn't want and they's only one of them she's had the nerve to wear. They cost her a hundred dollars a smash and I'd hate to think what the price would of been if Mrs. Stevens and the owner of the shop wasn't so much like sisters.

I was sure I hadn't made no date with Stevens, but just the same he called me up the next night to ask why I hadn't met him. And a couple of days later I got three new razors in the mail along with a bill and a note from the store sayin' that these was three specially fine razors that had been picked out for me by Thomas J. Stevens.

I don't know yet why I paid for the razors and kept 'em. I ain't used 'em and never intended to. Though I've been tempted a few times to test their edge on Stevens's neck.

That same week, Mrs. Stevens called up and asked us to spend Sunday with them and when we got out there, the owner of the buildin' is there, too. And Stevens has told him that I was goin' to give up my apartment on the South Side and wanted him to show me what he had.

I thought this was a little too strong and I said Stevens must of misunderstood me, that I hadn't no fault to find with the place I was in and wasn't plannin' to move, not for a year anyway. You can bet this didn't make no hit with the guy, who was just there on Stevens's say-so that I was a prospective tenant.

Well, it was only about two months ago that this cute little couple come into our life, but I'll bet we seen 'em twenty times at least. They was always invitin' us to their place or invitin' themselves to our place and Ada is one of these here kind of people that just can't say no. Which may be why I and her is married.

Anyway, it begin to seem like us and the Stevenses was livin' together and all one family, with them at the head of it. I never in my life seen anybody as crazy to run other people's business. Honest to heavens, it's a wonder they let us brush our own teeth!

Ada made the remark one night that she wished the ski jumper who was doin' our cookin' would get married and quit so's she wouldn't have to can her. Mrs. Stevens was there and asked Ada if she should try and get her a new cook, but Ada says no, the

poor gal might have trouble findin' another job and she felt sorry for her.

Just the same, the next afternoon a Jap come to the apartment and said he was ready to go to work and Mrs. Stevens had sent him. Ada had to tell him the place was already filled.

Another night, Ada complained that her feet was tired. Belle said her feet used to get tired, too, till a friend of hers recommended a chiropodist and she went to him and he done her so much good that she made a regular appointment with him for once every month and paid him a flat sum and no matter how much runnin' around she done, her dogs hadn't fretted her once since this corn-husker started tendin' to 'em.

She wanted to call up the guy at his home right then and there and make a date for Ada and the only way Ada could stop her was by promisin' to go and see him the next time her feet hurt. After that, whenever the two gals met, Belle's first question was "How is your feet?" and the answer was always "Fine, thanks."

Well, I'm quite a football fan and Ada likes to go, too, when it's a big game and lots of excitement. So we decided we'd see the Illinois-Chicago game and have a look at this "Red" Grange. I warned Ada to not say nothin' about it to Tom and Belle as I felt like we was entitled to a day off.

But it happened that they was goin' to be a game up at Evans-ton that day and the Stevenses invited us to see that one with them. So we used the other game as a alibi. And when Tom asked me later on if I'd boughten my tickets yet, instead of sayin' yes, I told him the truth and said no.

So then he said:

"I'm glad you ain't, because I and Belle has made up our mind that the Chicago game is the one we ought to see. And we'll all go together. And don't you bother about tickets because I can get better ones than you can as Staggs and I is just like that."

So I left it to him to get the tickets and we might as well of set on the Adams Street bridge. I said to Stevens, I said:

"If these is the seats Mr. Staggs digs up for his old pals, I suppose he leads strangers twenty or thirty miles out in the country and blindfolds 'em and ties 'em to a tree."

Now of course it was the bunk about he and Stagg bein' so close. He may of been introduced to him once, but he ain't the kind of a guy that Stagg would go around holdin' hands with. Just the same, most of the people he bragged about knowin', why it turned out that he really did know 'em; yes, and stood ace high with 'em, too.

Like, for instance, I got pinched for speedin' one night and they give me a ticket to show up in the Speeders' court and I told Stevens about it and he says, "Just forget it! I'll call up the judge and have it wiped off the book. He's a mighty good fella and a personal friend of mine."

Well, I didn't want to take no chances so I phoned Stevens the day before I was supposed to appear in court, and I asked him if he'd talked to the judge. He said he had and I asked him if he was sure. So he said, "If you don't believe me, call up the judge yourself." And he give me the judge's number. Sure enough, Stevens had fixed it and when I thanked the judge for his trouble, he said it was a pleasure to do somethin' for a friend of Tom Stevens's.

Now, I know it's silly to not appreciate favors like that and not warm up to people that's always tryin' to help you along, but still a person don't relish bein' treated like they was half-witted and couldn't button their shirt alone. Tom and Belle meant all right, but I and Ada got kind of tired of havin' fault found with everything that belonged to us and everything we done or tried to do.

Besides our apartment bein' no good and our clothes terrible, we learned that my dentist didn't know a bridge from a mustache cup, and the cigarettes I smoked didn't have no taste to them, and the man that bobbed Ada's hair must of been mad at her, and neither of us would ever know what it was to live till we owned a wire-haired fox terrier.

And we found out that the liquor I'd been drinkin' and enjoyin' was a mixture of bath salts and assorted paints, and the car we'd paid seventeen hundred smackers for wasn't nowhere near as much of a car as one that Tom could of got for us for eight hundred on account of knowin' a brother-in-law of a fella that used to go to school with the president of the company's

nephew, and that if Ada would take up aesthetic dancin' under a dame Belle knew about, why she'd never have no more trouble with her tonsils.

Nothin' we had or nothin' we talked about gettin' or doin' was worth a damn unless it was recommended or suggested by the Stevenses.

Well, I done a pretty good business this fall and I and Ada had always planned to spend a winter in the South, so one night we figured it out that this was the year we could spare the money and the time and if we didn't go this year we never would. So the next thing was where should we go, and we finally decided on Miami. And we said we wouldn't mention nothin' about it to Tom and Belle till the day we was goin'. We'd pretend we was doin' it out of a clear sky.

But a secret is just as safe with Ada as a police dog tethered with dental floss. It wasn't more than a day or two after we'd had our talk when Tom and Belle sprang the news that they was leavin' for California right after New Year's. And why didn't we go with them.

Well, I didn't say nothin' and Ada said it sounded grand, but it was impossible. Then Stevens said if it was a question of money, to not let that bother us as he would loan it to me and I could pay it back whenever I felt like it. That was more than Ada could stand, so she says we wasn't as poor as people seemed to think and the reason we couldn't go to California was because we was goin' to Miami.

This was such a surprise that it almost struck 'em dumb at first and all Tom could think of to say, was that he'd been to Miami himself and it was too crowded and he'd lay off of it if he was us. But the next time we seen 'em they had our trip all arranged.

First, Tom asked me what road we was goin' on and I told him the Big Four. So he asked if we had our reservations and I told him yes.

"Well," he said, "we'll get rid of 'em and I'll fix you up on the C. & E. I. The general passenger agent is a friend of mine and they ain't nothin' he won't do for my friends. He'll see that you're treated right and that you get there in good shape."

So I said:

"I don't want to put you to all that trouble, and besides I

don't know nobody connected with the Big Four well enough for them to resent me travelin' on their lines, and as for gettin' there in good shape, even if I have a secret enemy or two on the Big Four, I don't believe they'd endanger the lives of the other passengers just to see that I didn't get there in good shape."

But Stevens insisted on takin' my tickets and sellin' 'em back to the Big Four and gettin' me fixed on the C. & E. I. The berths we'd had on the Big Four was Lower 9 and Lower 10. The berths Tom got us on the C. & E. I. was Lower 7 and Lower 8, which he said was better. I suppose he figured that the nearer you are to the middle of the car, the less chance there is of bein' woke up if your car gets in another train's way.

He wanted to know, too, if I'd made any reservations at a hotel. I showed him a wire I had from the Royal Palm in reply to a wire I'd sent 'em.

"Yes," he says, "but you don't want to stop at the Royal Palm. You wire and tell 'em to cancel that and I'll make arrangements for you at the Flamingo, over at the Beach. Charley Krom, the manager there, was born and raised in the same town I was. He'll take great care of you if he knows you're a friend of mine."

So I asked him if all the guests at the Flamingo was friends of his, and he said of course not; what did I mean?

"Well," I said, "I was just thinkin' that if they ain't, Mr. Krom probably makes life pretty miserable for 'em. What does he do, have the phone girl ring 'em up at all hours of the night, and hide their mail, and shut off their hot water, and put cracker crumbs in their beds?"

That didn't mean nothin' to Stevens and he went right ahead and switched me from one hotel to the other.

While Tom was reorganizin' my program and tellin' me what to eat in Florida, and what bait to use for barracuda and carp, and what time to go bathin' and which foot to stick in the water first, why Belle was makin' Ada return all the stuff she had boughten to wear down there and buy other stuff that Belle picked out for her at joints where Belle was so well known that they only soaked her twice as much as a stranger. She had Ada almost crazy, but I told her to never mind; in just a few more days we'd be where they couldn't get at us.

I suppose you're wonderin' why didn't we quarrel with 'em

and break loose from 'em and tell 'em to leave us alone. You'd know why if you knew them. Nothin' we could do would convince 'em that we didn't want their advice and help. And nothin' we could say was a insult.

Well, the night before we was due to leave Chi, the phone rung and I answered it. It was Tom.

"I've got a surprise for you," he says. "I and Belle has give up the California idear. We're goin' to Miami instead, and on account of me knowin' the boys down at the C. & E. I., I've landed a drawin' room on the same train you're takin'. How is that for news?"

"Great!" I said, and I went back and broke it to Ada. For a minute I thought she was goin' to faint. And all night long she moaned and groaned and had hysterics.

So that's how we happened to come to Biloxi.

Sauce for the Gander

EVERY so often, when business slackens up in the bowling alley and the other pin boys are hunched over their game of bezique, I like to exchange my sweat-shirt for a crisp white surgical tunic, polish up my optical mirror, and examine the corset advertisements in the New York *Herald Tribune* rotogravure section and the various women's magazines. It must be made clear at the outset that my motives are the purest and my curiosity that of the scientific research worker rather than the sex maniac. Of course, I can be broken down under cross-examination; I like a trim ankle as well as anyone, but once I start scrubbing up and adjusting the operative mask, *Materia Medica* comes in the door and Betty Grable flies out the window.

God knows how the convention ever got started, but if it is true that the camera never lies, a foundation garment or a girdle stimulates the fair sex to a point just this side of madness. The little ladies are always represented with their heads thrown back in an attitude of fierce desire, arms upflung to an unseen deity as though swept along in some Dionysian revel. If you hold your ear close enough to the printed page, you can almost hear the throbbing of the temple drums and the chant of the votaries. Those sultry, heavy-lidded glances, those tempestuous, Corybantic gestures of abandon—what magic property is there in an

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ordinary silk-and-Latex bellyband to cause a housewife to behave like Little Egypt?

Perhaps the most curious mutation of the corset advertisement is the transformation, or clinical type, consisting of two photographs. The first shows a rather bedraggled young matron in a gaping, misshapen girdle at least half a dozen sizes too large for her, cringing under the cool inspection of a trained nurse and several friends. Judging from the flowers and the tea service, the hostess has invited her neighbors in to deride her physique, for they are exclaiming in unison, "Ugh, my dear—you've got *lordosis* (unlovely bulge and sagging backline)!" The second photograph, naturally, depicts the miracles wrought by the proper girdle, which, in addition to the benefits promised in the text, seems to have removed the crow's feet from under the subject's eyes, marcelled her hair, reupholstered the divan, and papered the walls.

It strikes me that, by contrast, the manufacturers of dainty underthings for men have been notably colorless in their advertising. The best they are able to afford are those static scenes in which four or five grim-jawed industrialists stand about a locker room in their shorts scowling at ticker tape, testing mashie niblicks, and rifling through first editions. It may be only sexual chauvinism on my part, but I submit that the opportunities for merchandising male lingerie are limitless. I offer at least one of them in crude dramatic form to blaze a trail for future copywriters.

(Scene: The consulting room of DR. TERENCE FITCH, an eminent Park Avenue specialist. The furniture consists of a few costly, unusual pieces, such as a kidney-shaped writing desk, a pancreas-shaped chair, and a spleen-shaped spittoon. As the curtain rises, MISS MAYO, the nurse, is at the telephone-shaped telephone.)

MISS MAYO (*into phone*)—Hello, Dr. Volney? . . . This is Miss Mayo at Dr. Fitch's office. The Doctor is forwarding you his analysis of Mr. Tichenor's underwear problems; you should have it in the morning. . . . Not at all.

(As she hangs up, DR. FITCH enters, thoughtfully stroking his Van-

dyke beard. He is followed by FREEDLEY, a haggard, middle-aged patient, knotting his tie.)

DR. FITCH—Sit down, Freedley. . . . Oh, this is Miss Mayo. She's a niece of the Mayo brothers, out West.

FREEDLEY (*wanly*)—How do you do, Miss Mayo? I've read grand things about your uncles.

MISS MAYO—Not mine, you haven't. They've been in Folsom the last three years for breaking and entering. (*She exits.*)

DR. FITCH (*seating himself*)—All right now, Freedley, suppose you tell me your symptoms.

FREEDLEY—But I just told them to you.

DR. FITCH—You did?

FREEDLEY—Sure, not ten minutes ago.

DR. FITCH—Well, repeat them. (*Angrily*) You don't suppose I have time to listen to every crackpot who comes in here bleating about his troubles, do you?

FREEDLEY (*humbly*)—No, sir. Well, it's just that I have this stuffy, uncomfortable sensation all the time.

DR. FITCH—That's the way a head cold usually starts. (*Scribbling*) You're to take fifteen of these tablets forty times a day, or forty of them fifteen times a day, whichever is more convenient.

FREEDLEY—It's not my nose or throat, Doctor. I get it mostly around the hips and the small of my back.

DR. FITCH (*testily*)—Of course, of course. That's where it's localized. Now, I also want you to get hold of a tonic. I forgot the name of it, but it's about thirty dollars a bottle. The clerk'll know.

FREEDLEY—Will I feel better after I take it?

DR. FITCH (*coldly*)—I'm a physician, Freedley, not an astrologer. If you want a horoscope, there's a gipsy tea-room over on Lexington Avenue.

FREEDLEY (*plaintively*)—Gee, Dr. Fitch, this thing's got me crazy. I can't keep my mind on my work—

DR. FITCH—Work? Humph. Most of my patients have private incomes. What do you do?

FREEDLEY—I'm with the Bayonne Bag & String Company—assistant office manager.

DR. FITCH—Getting along pretty well there? .

FREEDLEY (*pitifully*)—I was until this started. Now Mr. Borvis keeps riding me. He says I'm like a person in a fog.

DR. FITCH—That bulging, oppressive condition—notice it mostly when you're sitting down, don't you?

FREEDLEY—Why, how on earth can you tell, Doctor?

DR. FITCH—We medical men have ways of knowing these things. (*Gravely*) Well, Freedley, I can help you, but only if you face the facts.

FREEDLEY (*quavering*)—W-what is it, sir?

DR. FITCH—Your union suit is too big for you.

FREEDLEY (*burying his face in his hands*)—Oh, my God!

DR. FITCH—There, there. Buck up, old man. We mustn't give up hope.

FREEDLEY (*whimpering*)—But you might be mistaken—it's just a diagnosis.

DR. FITCH (*sternly*)—The fluoroscope never lies, Freedley. When I looked at you in there a moment ago, I saw almost five yards of excess fabric bunched around the mid-section.

FREEDLEY (*wildly*)—It's bound to shrink after I send it to the laundry! Maybe Velma can take a tuck in it!

DR. FITCH—That's only an evasion. (*Pressing a button*) It's lucky you came to me in time. If the public only knew the annual toll exacted by ponderous, loosely fitting underwear—(*MISS MAYO enters*) Miss Mayo, get me a sterile union suit, size thirty-eight, porous-knit.

FREEDLEY (*licking his lips*)—What—what are you going to do?

DR. FITCH (*soothingly*)—Now, this won't hurt a bit. We'll just slip it on for size—

FREEDLEY—I won't I won't! (*He cowers into a corner, flailing at DR. FITCH and MISS MAYO as they close in on him. They pinion his arms tightly, thrust him into an adjoining dressing room, and fling the union suit after him.*)

MISS MAYO (*in a low voice*)—Do you think he's got a chance, Doctor?

DR. FITCH—Hard to say, poor bugger. Did you feel those enlarged folds of material on his back.

MISS MAYO—He may have a blanket and some sheets hidden on him.

DR. FITCH—You can't tell. They get cunning in the later stages.

(The door-shaped door of the dressing room opens and FREEDLEY re-enters, a changed man. He is portly, well groomed, a connoisseur of fine horseflesh and pretty women, but withal a man of keen business judgment. He wears a pearl-gray Homburg, Chesterfield overcoat, and spats, carries a gold-headed cane, a hot bird, and a cold bottle.)

FREEDLEY (*booming*)—Well, Fitch, my boy, can't waste any more time jawing with you. I've got to cut along to that board meeting. Just merged Bayonne Bag & String with Consolidated Twine, you know!

DR. FITCH—Er—that was rather sudden, wasn't it?

FREEDLEY—Can't stand beating about the bush. Think in telegrams, that's my motto. Want to know my secret, Fitch? I've worked hard and I've played hard. And I've drunk a quart of whiskey every day of my life!

DR. FITCH—Well, remember what I said. Don't overdo it.

FREEDLEY (*roaring*)—Stuff and nonsense! Why, I'm as sound as a nut. Got the appetite of a boy of twenty, sleep like a top, and I'll outdance a youngster any day! *(To demonstrate, he catches up MISS MAYO, whirls her around giddily, and, flushed with exertion, drops dead. The Doctor and his nurse exchange slow, sidelong glances.)*

MISS MAYO—Well, I guess science still has a lot to learn.

DR. FITCH (*curtly*)—None of your god-damned lip. Drag him out and show in the next patient. *(He turns back to his desk, stroking his Vandyke more thoughtfully than ever.)*

CURTAIN

The Murderer of the Splendide

MESPOULETS fell apart both professionally and personally as the years went by. He was still in charge of the monkeyhouse, the dismal corner of the restaurant where the carpet was patched, where the service doors banged, where drafts of cold air came down from the ventilators directly overhead and cooking smells, mixed with the vapors of dishwater, came in warm waves from the kitchen. There, in the shadow of a dying palm tree, he functioned loudly and ineptly, breaking plates and glasses, spilling soup on people's sleeves, mixing up orders, and talking back to the guests. He was tired and miserable. In a dress suit shiny with the drippings of every soup and sauce on the menu, he could be seen leaning on a banister, biting his nails, looking into space, and waiting for the occasional undesirable customers whom Monsieur Victor sentenced to his tables. He made barely enough to live on and had moved from his furnished room in Chelsea to a cheaper one in Brooklyn. It was hard to find anyone to work with him; no bus boy wanted to share the meager tips or suffer the abuse of Mespoulets. Once kind and patient, he had become like a mean old dog. I was afraid that Mespoulets would be fired any day.

The firing of employees usually took place about nine in the morning. At that time every day, Monsieur Victor arrived in a short, black coat and striped trousers, sat down at a table in the empty dining room, drank a cup of English breakfast tea, ate a brioche, and smoked a few Dimitrinos. His secretary brought him

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the mail and sat at a table near by, ready to take down whatever orders he might have to give. His first assistant hovered around respectfully. The manager of the banquet department and myself were responsible directly to Monsieur Victor, and it was our duty to hover around also at this hour. Captains, waiters, and bus boys who were in trouble were called in and made to stand before Monsieur Victor, and a kind of court-martial was held. Victor, an expert at inflicting pain, moved his chair back and announced his findings slowly and usually with a smile. He treated the culprits to short, exquisite essays on promptness, on the relations between guest and waiter, on service, and on the particular circumstances of their cases. He loved to do this with deliberation. His essays nearly always ended in discharge. His judgments were absolute and final. He wished no advice, no defense of his victims, no recommendations for clemency, and, above all, no explanations.

It was no surprise to me when one morning while Monsieur Victor was opening his mail, he smiled, looked up at me, and then, as he started to read a letter, said, "Go call Mespoulets. I am going to fire your friend. He is—" But there he stopped. He put the letter he had just opened into his pocket and abruptly dismissed all those present. I started to leave the restaurant and he got up from his table, ran after me, took my arm, and said, "Come here. Have a look at this." Behind a screen near the sickly palm under which Mespoulets's tables stood, he showed me the letter he had put in his pocket. It was a sheet of yellow paper decorated with daggers and skulls and a bleeding heart. Under this was printed in crude letters, "YOU ARE DOOMED, MONSIEUR VICTOR." Monsieur Victor looked doomed; he no longer smiled; his voice had changed. He read the words over and over, looked at the drawings, held the paper against the light, and then looked at the envelope. It was postmarked "Brooklyn." "What do you think of it?" he asked me. "Should I call the police? My God, I have never—what do you think?" I said that I thought it was a joke. At that moment Mespoulets came in with an armful of tablecloths and began to put them on his tables, smoothing them out with his hands. He made a deep bow and said, "*Bonjour*, M'sieur Victor." Monsieur Victor, who hardly ever spoke directly to an employee except to reprimand him and answered all greet-

ings with a curt nod of his head, said, "*Bonjour, Mespoulets.*" I thought he might be in the proper mood for leniency, and I asked him if, as a favor to me, he would let me take Mespoulets over into the banquet department, where I could give him a simple job in which his shortcomings would not be noticeable.

"Of course, of course," he said. "But about this—about the letter—should I call the police? Don't you think it would be better if I did? No, no," he answered himself. "I think you are right. It's a joke." He tore the letter up. Then he put the pieces together and read the message once more, shoved it into his pocket, and went to his office. Two more letters with the same decorations, the same warning of doom for Monsieur Victor, and the same Brooklyn postmark arrived that week, and Monsieur Victor remained nervous and subdued. No one was fired for days, and Mespoulets became a waiter in the banquet department.

The waiters who are engaged to work at banquets need not be as swift, as intelligent, or as presentable as those who serve in the restaurants of a hotel such as the Splendide. Their duties are much simpler. At a banquet, each waiter has one table. At that table are seated eight guests, who naturally all eat the same things at the same time. A signal—usually a green light somewhere near the ceiling—is given by the banquet headwaiter when the guests are to be served a new course, and the signal also tells the waiters when the plates are to be changed for the next course. Banquet menus are, with rare exceptions, unimaginative and repetitious. The waiters are a kind of conveyor belt that runs from kitchen to guests and then out into the pantry, loaded with the dirty dishes. They line up in front of the various counters, in turn, outside in the banquet kitchen; at one counter they get the fruit cocktail, at another the soup, then the fish, then the roast, the vegetables, the salad, and finally the dessert, the *petits fours*, and the coffee. Captains stand everywhere to keep them in line and tell them where to go. It is all cut and dried. The people on the dais, at the speakers' table, or, in the case of weddings, the immediate family, are served by a few well-trained men. The rest are extras hired for the night. Although Mespoulets was worse than most of the extras, I put him on the regular pay roll and assigned him to a table in the ballroom, where the big banquets were held. His table was just a few steps away from the pantry.

He was teamed up with a younger waiter, another Frenchman, named Ladame, and it seemed to be working out about as well as I had expected.

Every large hotel has among its waiters a group of malcontents. They congregate in groups in the pantries while they wait to serve; they stand in the kitchen or pantry and discuss the state of the world. In those days the Germans argued about their German problems; the Italians, in another group, waved their napkins in the air and shouted and made wild-eyed predictions. Mespoulets was soon the leader of the discontented Frenchmen. He was articulate, he had Communistic ideas, and in his harangues he rescued a few ominous bons mots from his failing memory. "*Ecrasez l'infâme!*" he would shout. The nervous French waiters who were in his group sometimes thought him too violent. The Germans and Italians would come up and listen to him. The pantry rang with his eloquence, and often I had to send a captain to tell him to be quiet, because the noise could be heard inside the ballroom above the voices of the speakers. Even the waiters sometimes said, "Sh-h-h! Quiet, Mespoulets."

When the signal to serve was given, Mespoulets usually came down from his pulpit, the second step of the pantry stairway, and ran to get a tray of dishes. Trembling, mumbling, and excited, he walked into the ballroom and served his guests. Then he retired to a corner, wiped the sweat from his forehead with a napkin instead of his handkerchief, and bit his nails until the little green light gave the signal to clear off. He would not see it, but his partner, Ladame, would say, "All right, Mespoulets, clear off," and Mespoulets would clear off.

Mespoulets was moody. For several days at a time he would seem to be happy, almost elated. Around his mouth played a smile of self-satisfaction, and he talked confidently to the other waiters. From this mood he would sink into a torpid, sullen state and complain of severe headaches. One time, after a long speech to the other waiters, he fell on the floor of the pantry in a faint. He lay with his eyes wide open and his hands turned into claws. When he came to, I got the house physician to look at him. The doctor said he just needed a few days' rest. I sent him to his room in Brooklyn in a taxicab and told him to stay there until he felt well again.

About a week later, he came back. After what had happened, I could no longer employ him as a waiter, but he could be used on other, easier jobs. I made him a captain. I thought there could be no waiter so dumb or so old that he could fail as a captain in the banquet department. A captain in the banquet department has a black tie instead of a white one, and for the rest, he nods to guests as they come in and smiles and shows people where the ladies' and gentlemen's rooms are—"Downstairs to the left, Madame. Downstairs to the right, Monsieur." He is engaged chiefly for decorative purposes, and the only other thing he has to do is pass the cigars while the coffee is being served. Mespoulets, however, proved he could not be trusted even with these duties. He did not take any cigars for himself, but he became absent-minded and passed them to the ladies. He gave both ladies and gentlemen the wrong directions. He also had more time for his speeches now, and kept the waiters out in the pantry instead of at their stations. So this appointment, too, was proved a mistake. I had to take his black tie away from him and give him a job in which he did not come in contact with the guests.

He was assigned to order rolls and butter when they were needed and to see that the musicians got their water, coffee, and sandwiches. The rest of the time he was an unofficial watchman at doors through which people could crash a party.

On one such watchman's assignment he stood up on a balcony overlooking the ballroom. On this balcony was a door which could not be locked, since it served as an emergency exit in case of fire. This was a favorite door for crashers, and also for dishwashers and other employees who were curious, who wanted to listen to music or occasionally to the speeches. It was the watchman's duty to see that no one came in through that door.

A dinner was given one evening for a distinguished French author, an Academician whose writings were of a political character. The ballroom was filled with very important guests; some of them had come from Washington. At the speakers' table presided Dr. Finley of the *Times*. In the audience were Otto Kahn, Barney Baruch, Secretary Lansing. French and American flags were on the tables, an orchestra was engaged to play during the reception, ending with the anthems of both countries. Dinner

was at eight sharp, speeches after the coffee, everything over by midnight.

Just before the speeches began, I walked up to the balcony to see if Mespoulets was watching his door. He was leaning against it and biting his nails, and when he saw me, he pointed below and said, "Give me two machine guns, one on this side and the other over on the other side. I'll cover the doors and get them as they try to get out, just like with a hose up and down—*brrrrrrrr*—and the other gun can spray the speakers' table—*brrrrrrrr*—*brrrrrrrr*—*brrrrrrrr*, Table No. 1—*brrrrrrrr*, Table No. 2—aim for the plates, shoot through the table, hit them in the stomach so they suffer awhile. Here are our enemies. "*Ecrasez l'infâme*," he almost shouted. "*Liberté, égalité, fraternité!* Ah! What has become of you? What mockery! Look there! They're all crooks!"

"All right, Mespoulets, go home," I said, and put another watchman in his place.

Since Mespoulets was a good penman, I gave him a job we had open for a man to make out lists of material that had to be ordered for banquets—long sheets of paper on which were printed the many things one needs to serve a mass of people. The lists started with demitasse spoons and ended with how many buckets of fine ice and cube ice had to be ordered to cool champagne, to shake up in cocktails, at what time all this had to be delivered, and to what pantry. Besides this, checks had to be sent out for various supplies which the department bought. To this job we assigned Mespoulets, and he did his work to everyone's satisfaction. He seemed very happy to have escaped into a job in which, he said, he was a gentleman and could use his mind. He kept clerical hours now, washed his hands at five, and at five-thirty went home. There was peace for a while in the ballroom. Below, in the restaurant, the letters on yellow paper decorated with daggers, guns, and bleeding hearts, and more recently with bombs blowing up table and chairs, kept arriving regularly.

Monsieur Victor had begun to get used to them, but he was still a little nervous. Von Kyling, the banquet manager, had shown them to the police captain of our precinct, who said that they were clearly from a dangerous man. The police captain asked if any of us had any suspicions as to who the writer of the

letters might be, and von Kyling said that it could be any one of a thousand or so employees whom Monsieur Victor had fired, or even one of the innumerable undesirable guests of the hotel whom he had insulted in the course of many years. The police captain said in that case he could be of little help. Monsieur Victor continued to examine the letters and show them to us when they came in, but none of us could think of anything to do about them. His secretary kept on filing them away.

Late one afternoon, Ladame, the French waiter who had been teamed with Mespoulets in the ballroom, came to me with the face of one who is burdened. He twisted and squeezed a napkin in his hands and moved a chair and finally asked for a few words with me alone. He asked for my strict confidence, and then, looking around several times and leading me to a dim corner of the ballroom, told me that he did not wish to turn informer but he felt he had to tell me, and that he told me because I was a friend of Mespoulets and had always helped him, and so on, and that he told me only because he was worried. He finally whispered that Mespoulets had said if he, Ladame, would bring him his telephone and gas and electric-light bills, he would see to it that they were paid. Mespoulets had explained that he was the secretary of the banquet department now, and sent out checks, and that he would arrange to mix these bills with invoices and have them O.K.'d and paid. It was perfectly all right to do this, Mespoulets had said, because the hotel oppressed and exploited its employees. Monsieur Victor, who was rich, was particularly tyrannical and this was just one little way in which he could make things even. To how many men Mespoulets had offered this assistance, Ladame did not know.

When I went to look for Mespoulets, I found he had gone home. I asked the night auditor to come over and we went through the invoices. We found several irregularities—checks Mespoulets had sent out for small sums, like two dollars and thirty-five cents, a dollar eighty, and the highest for four dollars and thirty-six cents. I asked the auditor to keep the matter quiet for the time being.

Early the next day I looked for Mespoulets again. I could tell that he had come to work because his hat and coat were in the employees' cloakroom, but he was not at his desk.

I walked all over the hotel in search of him. He was not in any of the large rooms, or down among the waiters' dressing rooms, where he sometime hung out. He was not in the employees' barber shop or at one of the tables in the staff dining room, where he now took his meals. I looked for him in the private dining rooms, the pantries, and in the Jade Suite. He was not there either.

The architectural waste that goes with the building of the elaborate public apartments of a luxury hotel creates many odd corners. A semicircular dining room, a flight of stairs from one elevation to another, rotundas and balconies—in, under, and around all these are vacant spaces which are used as lockers for brooms, vacuum cleaning equipment, extra tables, and spare pieces of furniture. We had dozens of these closets. Mespoulets was in none of them.

At the south side of the ballroom, under the stage, was a long corridor. The electricians went in there sometimes to replace fuses or to connect cables for projection machines when movies were to be shown. The parts of a long horseshoe table were stored in there as well. On one side of this passage were switches and boxes with fuses, and on the other was a row of steel doors, behind which the elevators passed up and down, sucking in air and rattling the doors. The place was filled with the breathing of the heavy machinery, a mechanical intake and outgo, and a machine somewhere far below pounded in even rhythm like a beating heart. I walked in there and saw Mespoulets at the other end. He was leaning against a steel door, holding his head with both hands and howling like an animal. He had not heard me come in and he did not see me go.

It all fitted together now—the speeches, the feeling of persecution exhibited in the petty embezzlements, the resentment of Monsieur Victor, the fainting spell, the periods of elation and depression, and now this hysteria. I remembered all the way back to when I was his bus boy and how I went home with him one day and saw him cut his canary's head off. Mespoulets lived in Brooklyn, and he was obviously the man who had been writing the letters.

I went to Monsieur Victor's secretary and asked her to give me the letters. A new one had arrived a few days before. On the

yellow paper there was again the bleeding heart, the dagger filled in with red ink to the hilt, and a scene in which a bomb blew up tables and chairs. The chairs in the restaurant of the Splendide were of peculiar construction, very costly, and styled unlike the chairs in any other restaurant. Even in the crude fashion in which the chairs on the yellow paper were drawn, they clearly resembled our chairs. Someone who knew these chairs well and had worked among them was writing and illustrating the letters. Every protecting doubt vanished. The last letter was signed in something of a brownish shade. It was more violent and confused than any of the others had been.

Without telling either Monsieur Victor or von Kyling, I took the packet of letters and went to see the head of the psychiatric department of one of the city's largest hospitals, a man who often came to the hotel and with whom I was acquainted. He looked at them carefully and began to read them. Soon he became interested and started to nod his head. He thought that the last one was probably signed with blood. He swung his chair around and said, "This man is a killer." I asked him if anything could be done about the situation, and he said, "Sometimes—if there is a close relative willing to sign a commitment to an insane asylum. Has this man any relatives?"

"He has, as far as I know, a daughter who lives in France—Marseille," I said.

"There you are," he said. "Without a relative, you can do very little. If you had a business out and away from everywhere, then, between you and me, I'd advise you to run him over with a truck and make it look like an accident. As it is, there's nothing much you can do. The laws governing the legal commitment of such people are themselves psychopathic. Why, only last year, twenty-one such cases were brought to me right here in this hospital. I had to release every one of them, identical cases, exactly like this one. Up to this moment seven of them have done murder, and I am waiting for the others. Under the law, you need a relative to commit them. It's practically impossible to have them put away without a relative. The law is on the side of these maniacs. If they go before a lunacy commission, they usually blossom out and talk like philosophers. This man is safe as long as he can take it out in writing letters, but God help you if he runs out of red

ink. Whatever you do, don't annoy him, and for heaven's sake don't fire him.

"There's always this comfort. Last year one of these fellows chased me all over the lobby of a hotel in Milwaukee. He fired four times and missed me three. The fourth shot was only a flesh wound." The doctor pulled up his right trouser leg and showed me a scar just below his knee. "They get into a high state of excitement, and the motor reactions are interfered with, and for that reason he may quite possibly miss you."

The psychiatrist gave me back the letters, and at the elevator he said once more, "And don't forget, whatever you do, don't fire him, and try not to provoke him."

I went back to the hotel as quickly as I could and ran up to the ballroom. As I passed through the outer office, I saw that Mespoulets' desk was still vacant. But instead of the usual disorder, the ink, pens, and blotters were neatly arranged, and the books and various forms he used for ordering material had been put away. I asked von Kyling where Mespoulets was, and he said that Monsieur Victor had found out about the checks and had fired him just before lunch.

"How did he take it?" I asked.

"He didn't say a word—just nodded, and went and got his hat and coat and left," said von Kyling.

I went over to the restaurant and asked Monsieur Victor to come to the ballroom, where we could talk privately. I gave him back the letters and told him what the doctor at the hospital had said. Monsieur Victor sat down. His face twitched and he said, "Oh God, oh God, oh *my God!*" He wanted to call the police, but, afraid of the bad publicity this might bring to the Splendide, he instead gave orders to the time-keeper not to let Mespoulets into the hotel. He stationed a maître d'hôtel at the entrance to the lobby and another in the pantry, and before he went to his office he called up his secretary and asked, "Is everything all right over there?" "Yes, everything is all right over here," she answered. He looked around corners as he left the office, slowly walked out into the open ballroom, ran down to the restaurant, and, in spite of all these precautions, complained of a headache and went home right after lunch.

He came to see von Kyling and me the next morning in the

ballroom office before he had his brioche and coffee. He said that he had not been able to close an eye all night.

Von Kyling told him that he had privately consulted the police captain again, and he had said that they might pick up Mespoulets and hold him for a while for leading a Communist demonstration, but that eventually they would have to let him go. The man, he said, had his constitutional rights. Of course, after he had shot somebody, they would move right in on him. "But that," said Monsieur Victor, "would be small consolation to my family."

He had a drink, then called up his office, and asked, as he had the day before, "Is everything all right over there?" and his secretary answered that everything was all right. He took one more drink and went over to his office.

Von Kyling and I sat down. Von Kyling was a quiet man and always did the thinking when we were in any difficulty. He was bald on top of his head and over each ear was a patch of gray hair which he let grow very long. When he thought hard he twisted these hairs into curls. He had not slept either.

"Before we do anything," said von Kyling, "we want to find out how Mespoulets feels about this. We'll get hold of Ladame and send him over to Mespoulets's house. Ladame is to tell him that he is very indignant at his discharge and he is to try and find out how Mespoulets feels about it."

We sent Ladame to Brooklyn. He came back and said that he had found Mespoulets sitting at a table, talking to himself and drinking brandy. He had bitten his fingernails, refused to answer questions, and looked out of the window.

When Ladame had left, von Kyling said to me, "Listen carefully and tell me how this sounds to you. The telephone bills and the gas and electric-light bills were paid with company checks. You go over with Ladame and see Mespoulets. He trusts you. You tell him that you have come to warn him. Say that the company has put the whole thing into the hands of the police and that the police are on the way to his house, but because you are his friend, you have come to warn him and help him to get away. We have to get him on a boat, get him out of the country. Once he's out, he can't come back. He's not even got his first papers."

For the next hour, von Kyling was busy telephoning. With the aid of the hotel's steamship agent, he found the office of a travel

bureau which specialized in trips on tramp steamers. Their downtown office informed us of four boats that were leaving at dawn the next day. The most suitable of these seemed to be the twelve-thousand cargo boat *Sadi Carnot*, sailing from Brooklyn for Marseille. There was no time to lose. While von Kyling arranged for the passage, Ladame and I went to see Mespoulets in his rooming house. We found him bent over a table in his room. He listened quietly. We did not mention the letters and neither did he. He thanked us for our efforts to save him from the police, we helped him pack, and then we sent a cable to his daughter Mélanie to meet the boat in Marseille. We took him out to a late dinner, gave him more to drink, and put him on his ship toward morning. In his stateroom, we helped him into bed, left him some money, and sat with him as he fell asleep. We left him just before the boat sailed at sunrise.

As soon as Monsieur Victor walked into the hotel that morning, he called von Kyling up and asked whether everything was all right, then asked us to come over to his office. He listened quietly to our report of what we had done with Mespoulets. When he had been troubled, he had become cordial. Now he was himself again. He spoke in the pompous, somewhat mincing tones that he affected with his guests; he divided his attention between the telephone and a list of reservations beside which he was writing table numbers. He had realized that we might ask him for a contribution toward the cost of disposing of Mespoulets, so now, without asking what this sum was, he suggested that it might be broken up and charged against sundry operating expenses. He hummed softly to himself and disappeared among his tables, placing reservation cards here and there.

Monsieur Victor's reprieve from anxiety was brief. A week later, at the customary morning court-martial for employees about to be fired, Victor was opening his mail and prolonging the sentencing of a bus boy with a little essay on service when he flung down a half-opened envelope. Protruding from an envelope was the familiar yellow paper, and when we unfolded the letter, there was the bleeding heart once more and the warning, "YOU ARE DOOMED, MONSIEUR VICTOR." The letter had been mailed the night before, in Brooklyn.

Another Uncle Edith Christmas Story

UNCLE EDITH said: "I think it is about time that I told you a good old-fashioned Christmas story about the raging sea."

"Aw, nuts!" said little Philip.

"As you will," said Uncle Edith, "but I shall tell it just the same. I am not to be intimidated by a three-year-old child. Where was I?"

"You were over backwards, with your feet in the air, if I know anything about you," said Marian, who had golden hair and wore it in an unbecoming orange ribbon.

"I guess that you probably are right," said Uncle Edith, "although who am I to say? Anyway, *I do* know that we sailed from Nahant on the fourteenth March."

"What are you—French?" asked little Philip, "the fourteenth March."

"The fourteenth *of* March, then," said Uncle Edith, "and if you don't shut up I will keep right on with the story. You can't intimidate me."

"Done and done," said little Philip, who bled quite a lot from a wound in his head inflicted a few seconds before by Uncle Edith.

"We set sail from Nahant on the fourteenth of March (nya-a-a) on the good ship *Patience W. Littbaum*, with a cargo of old thread and bound for Algeciras."

From *Benchley Beside Himself*, by Robert Benchley; this selection copyright 1930 by the author. Reprinted by permission of Harper and Brothers.

"End of story!" announced Marian in a throaty baritone.

"It is *not* the end of the story, and I will sue anyone who says that it is," petulated Uncle Edith. "You will know well enough when I come to the end of the story, because I shall fall over on my face. Now be quiet or Uncle Edith will give you a great big abrasion on the forehead."

"I can hardly wait," said little Philip, or whichever the hell one of those children it was, I can't keep them all straight, they are all so much alike.

"Aboard," continued Uncle Edith, "aboard were myself, as skipper—"

"Skippered herring," (*a whisper*).

"—Lars Jannssenn, first mate; Max Schnirr, second mate; Enoch Olds, third base; and a crew of seven whose names you wouldn't recognize. However, there we were.

"The first 709 days were uneventful. The sailmaker (a man by the name of Sailmaker, oddly enough) made eleven sails, but, as we had no more ships to put them on, and as our sails were O.K., we had to throw them overboard. This made the men discontented, and there were rumors of mutiny. I sent a reporter up to see the men, however, and the rumors were unconfirmed; so I killed the story. NO MUTINY was the head I put on it in the ship's paper that night, and everybody was satisfied."

"You great big wonderful animal," said Marian, running her tiny hand through Uncle Edith's hair.

"It was nothing," said Uncle Edith, and everybody agreed that it certainly was.

"However," continued the old salt pork, "everyone on board felt that something was wrong. We were at that time at Lat. seventy-eight, Long. seventy-eight, which cancelled each other, making us right back where we started from—"

"Don't tell me that we are back at Nahant again," said little Philip, throwing up.

"Not exactly Nahant," said Uncle Edith, "but within hailing distance of a Nahanted ship."

"You just used Nahant in the first place so that you could pull that gag," said Primrose, who, up to this time, had taken no part in the conversation, not having been born.

"So help me God," said Uncle Edith, "it came to me like *that!*"

And he snapped a finger, breaking it. "The ha'nted ship lay just off our starboard bow, and seemed to be manned by mosquitoes. As we drew alongside, however, we found that there was not a soul on board. Not a soul on board."

"That is the second time you have said that," said little whatever-his-name-is—Philip.

Uncle Edith made no reply other than to throw nasty little Philip into irons.

"'Prepare to board!' was the order given. And everybody, ignoring the chance for a pun, prepared to board the derelict. In a few seconds we were swarming over the side of the empty ship and searching every nook and cranny of her. The search, however, was fruitless. The ship's log was found in the wheelhouse, but, as the last entry read, 'Fair and warm. Billy said he didn't love me as much as he does Anna,' we discarded that as evidence. In the galley we found a fried egg, done on only one side, and an old bo'sun who was no good to anybody. Other than these two things the mystery was complete."

"Not that I give a damn," said Marian, "but what was the explanation to this almost complete mystery?"

"If you will shut your trap," said Uncle Edith, "I will tell you. As I may not have told you, the mystery ship was full of sleeping Hessian troops, such as were used against the colonists in the Revolutionary War. They were gay in their red coats and powdered wigs, and, had they been awake, might have offered some solution of the problem which now presented itself to us.

"'What shall I do, cap'n?' asked Lars Jannssenn, who had been promoted to purser.

"'What would you *like* to do, Lars?' I asked him.

"'Me, I would like to have three wishes,' was the typically Scandinavian reply. (Lars had belonged to the Scandi-navy before he joined up with us.)

"'They are yours,' I said, more on the spur of the moment than anything else. 'You take your three wishes and put them in your hat and pull it down over your ears. Anybody else?'

"Suddenly there was a scream from below decks. I have heard screams in my day, but never anything like this one. It was dark by now, and there were a lot of couples necking in the lifeboats.

But this scream was different. It was like nothing human. It came from the bowels of the ship, and you know that's bad.

"'All hands below!' I cried in my excitement.

"'What is all this—a game?' asked the crew, as one man.

"'I am captain here,' I said, boxing the compass roundly, 'and what I say goes! In the future please try to remember that fact.'

"Well, this sort of thing went on for hours. Up and down the ship we went, throwing overboard Hessians in our rush, until finally the cook came to me and said: 'Cap'n, I frankly am sick of this. Are there, or are there not, any reasons why we should be behaving like a pack of schoolboys?'

"This was a poser. I called the crew together and we decided to go back to the *Patience W. Littbaum*. But, on looking over the side, we found a very suspicious circumstance. *The Patience W. Littbaum was gone!*"

"I don't believe it!" said little Philip, from the brig.

Uncle Edith turned sharply. "I thought you were in irons," he said.

"You think a lot," replied little Philip, and the entire casino burst into a gale of laughter, although it was a pretty lousy come-back, even for a three-year-old.

"Very well, then," said Uncle Edith. "I am sorry if you feel that way. For I was just going to end the story by saying that we sailed the mystery ship back to Nahant."

"And where does Christmas come in?" piped up Marian, who hadn't heard a word of Uncle Edith's story.

"Who the hell said anything about Christmas?" asked Uncle Edith in a rage.

And who the hell did?

The Rabbit That Bit the Bulldog

HEYWOOD BROWN used to be fond of saying in his column that there was one theme upon which he was competent to speak with complete authority. By some happy chance it was his favorite subject. He maintained that he was an expert on Heywood Brown.

This boast was groundless. Although the most thorough-going practitioner of personal journalism in New York, he managed in ten years' time to fashion a wholly erroneous picture of himself. Particularly false was the impression created during the recent controversy between the columnist and his employer, Ralph Pulitzer, the owner of the *World*. Brown compared himself to a pitcher who had to achieve a fine frenzy of perspiration before he could lay the ball anywhere near the plate, and Pulitzer aided in the deception by gravely observing that his hired hand had an unfortunate tendency to express his personal opinion "with the utmost extravagance."

Accordingly, the legend grew that here was an untamed spirit bubbling over with the spirit of revolt and obstreperousness. All of which is distinctly news to those residents under the golden dome who have heard the meek and anxious tone of Heywood Brown as he replied, "Yes, Mr. Swope," in answer to some booming remark from the executive editor.

The truth of the matter is that Brown belongs among the exceptionally timorous. Almost any mouse can frighten this elephant. A confirmed hypochondriac, he fears open places, closed

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places, high places, angina pectoris, cows, darkness and all loud voices. His collection of doctors is one of the finest ever acquired by a private connoisseur. When the mood is on him he has been known to visit as many as three specialists a day and he is completely craveneted against reassurance.

In all fairness, it should be said that Brown seems to regard a typewriter as a sort of barricade. When crouched before a keyboard he does manage to assume an audacity which he could not possibly maintain against anyone who said "Boo" in his presence. But he has been known to be less than stalwart in carrying out precepts which he set for himself in print. A few years ago the columnist worked up a mighty rage against the Ku Klux Klan and attacked it with Biblical fury. By some coincidence a Connecticut Klavern chose this particular time to burn a fiery cross north of Stamford. He was in New York, but when informed of the incident he assumed that the rite was intended as a personal warning. Immediately he wrote a piece for his paper in which he said, in effect, "If the Klan thinks it can terrorize me I want them to know that I will be in the farmhouse alone this Saturday night and let them come and get me if they dare."

Some of his Algonquin friends remonstrated saying, "I think that's a bad idea, Heywood. You know they really might come and maul you."

"Don't be silly," said Brown, "I just wrote that. I'm not going anywhere near the place. Next Saturday I'm going to be right here playing poker."

However, the thing is a little more subtle than this. Like all timorous people the very large man has occasional fits of recklessness. People who refuse for years on end to expend any courage are apt, upon occasion, to blow their savings on a single spree. Brown's pattern seems to be one rash act every seven years. In his early undergraduate days he engaged quite eagerly in a rough-and-tumble battle with a dance-hall proprietor famous for his skill in smashing heads with empty bottles. Brown explained his own escape from injury on the ground that he and Sweeney kept rolling over so fast that he managed always to present a moving target.

At the duly appointed peak of the cycle seven years later the columnist accepted an invitation from two subway rowdies to

get off at the next station and show them what business it was of his. This argument arose over a problem in etiquette. Broun contended that the men had no right to address two cabaret singers from Joel's without an introduction. His opponents were both small men, but with the aid of a ticket-chopper's chair and a subway lantern they managed to give him quite a beating which sent him back into the ways of timidity for another seven years.

The war found him a very frightened correspondent with the American army, and one of his bitterest memories concerns an enthusiastic conducting officer who exulted over the fact that he had prevailed upon the authorities at Verdun to allow this reportorial group to get nearer to the actual combat than newspaper representatives had ever before been permitted at this point. Broun went grudgingly, and fortunately for his peace of mind the afternoon turned out quiet and there was very little shelling. A few landed close to the tourists when they were on their way back and just about to embark in some automobiles concealed behind a convenient cliff. "None of us ran," Broun says, "but we all walked briskly. And I didn't take the lead either. I was merely a good strong third, but I never let them pocket me and I was always in a swell position to win that race if I had to."

A few years later the conventional period of lying low ended and the columnist hissed loudly at an Irish-Republican street-corner meeting because the orator of the evening said that Michael Collins, one of Broun's heroes, had "sold out for British gold." And, to make his attitude of disapprobation a little clearer, the embattled rabbit pressed close to the speaker and threw three pennies in his face. It was his intention to cap this gesture by walking away contemptuously, but four partisans colared him within fifty yards and he received one of the most extensive black eyes which have been known on Broadway.

The recent row with the *World* was inevitable. Broun's planetary course of quietude had passed. The stars sang to him to take a sock at someone and to the surprise of many, including himself, he bit the hand that fed him. There was, however, more than a tidal condition to account for his madness. The *World* undertook to shush him at a moment when his emotions were deeply involved in the cause of Sacco and Vanzetti. For years he had com-

plained with some reason of an inability to work up a satisfactory amount of hate. And now he had it. The first piece which he wrote against Lowell and Fuller was by all odds, to his mind, the best he had ever done for his paper. Nor had his momentum quite subsided when editorial censorship set in. It was a little as if somebody shouted to a pole vaulter in mid-career, "Please go no further."

In saying that Broun has small capacity for setting down indignation I do not mean to suggest that he feels none. Possibly the falsest item in the portrait of himself which he created was the expression of amiability. Heywood Broun is not in any fundamental sense a kindly person. He merely palms off timidity as something just as good as affability. Most of the people who read him had the feeling that he was Falstaffian. Hamletish would be closer, for his blood runs thinner than that of the fat knight and much more acid. Only by the grossest misapprehension could he ever be classified as belonging to even the lower orders of the fraternity of wits and humorists. To some extent he was engulfed in the generalization which the public made concerning what used to be known as "the little Algonquin group." There was an impression that everybody who happened to lunch at a certain round table was of necessity cynical, jaded and intent upon the making of smart lines.

In this category Broun distinctly does not belong. His capacity for humorous invention is of the slightest. Although for seven years a regular attendant at a weekly poker game rather devoted to the making of wisecracks, he is remembered by his associates for only one joke, and that they could hardly forget because he trotted it out so often. It had something to do with some home-made wine proffered by a player upon a certain rainy evening. The integrity of the beverage was open to question and Broun remarked, "Well, any port in a storm." The jest was rendered all the more feeble by the fact that the wine was really sherry.

The exigencies of a newspaper job sometimes made it necessary for the columnist to try his hand at frivolity, but he did it badly, for he has no true lightness of touch. Probably he was not unaware of this fact. Heywood Broun has always taken himself very seriously. Even his attempts at painting in oil, about which he

has joked defensively, seem to him a weighty activity. "Cynical" fits him not at all, for he is too romantic and too immature for any such point of view. Although seldom identified by the public as one of the uplifters, this is the class in which Broun belongs by nature. If he ever grows more articulate in expression he will be readily identified as belonging to the reform group. To some he has seemed a somewhat pallid Mencken, but he is in fact a lesser Don Marquis. Like his more gifted model, his real interests lie in serious and even sombre fantasy. Of his several ventures into story-telling Broun took no pride in any book to which he set his name except a short novel called "Gandle Follows His Nose." Such critics as read it stamped the little book as thin and humorously intended, but Broun was savagely earnest in his defeatist fairy tale. Man, so his theme went, lives in a circle and when he has been all the way around he might as well call it a day.

However, he undoubtedly believes that he himself has not yet completed the range of his lap. No reference to the girth of the columnist is intended. As a matter of fact he is hardly as fat as the caricaturists would have him. But for an habitual stoop he would easily be recognized as the tallest New York newspaperman since Spike Hunt went *Cosmopolitan*. What I mean to say was that Heywood Broun is an intensely ambitious man whose hopes of making a name for himself are seriously compromised by a monstrous inertia. Some years ago it was rather the thing to do to refer to him as a promising young writer. He is no longer young, and he has not yet been graduated out of the promising stage, so nothing may come of his aspirations.

And laziness has not been his only handicap. He was never the type to conduct a daily newspaper column without suffering injury. If he has a gift it falls within rather narrow limits and it became his columnar practice to boil over and over again the same material.

To some his present alliance with the *Nation* may seem a little incongruous. Indeed it is to the extent that Broun is in no sense an intellectual. Mr. Villard's readers from now on are likely to be somewhat startled by references to Babe Ruth, Bob Meusel and other characters with whom they can hardly be familiar. But

in another sense Broun does belong under the banner of Garrison's grandson. In the secret places of his heart he is a crusader riding out to do battle even though he dreads it. Still, when his time and tide come round he may yet swing a mace and crack a skull.

How to Tell Your Friends from the Apes, *or, A Monkey a Day*

The Chimpanzee

THE CHIMPANZEE* is found in Equatorial Africa and vaudeville. He is the brightest of the Anthropoid Apes because he is so classified by scientists with incomes over five thousand dollars. If the scientist places a banana in a box the Chimpanzee will go and get it and eat it. The Chimpanzee also likes hominy, lettuce, raspberries, weak tea and black beetles. Chimpanzees are highly excitable and partly web-footed. They are amusing but terribly shallow. They can be very trying. The love life of Chimpanzees is about what you might expect. When a Chimpanzee looks at another Chimp he does not see what we see. They frequently have twins. Male Chimpanzees are called Soko or Bam. Females are called Malapunga. Chimpanzee sweethearts say very little. They can say "Yes" and "No" and "Thank you very much."† They can count up to five. They are faithful within reason. In the Chimpanzee the halux is opposable and the pollex is not. In Man it is just the other way round so it all comes out even. The Chimpanzee smokes, rides a bicycle and wears pants. His chief ambition is to play the Palace. The Chimpanzee has one-third enough brains and that's something. Or is it?

From *How to Tell Your Friends from the Apes, or, A Monkey a Day*, by Will Cuppy; copyright 1931 by Liveright Publishing Corporation.

* Aristotle did not mention Chimps but they got along somehow.

† What they really say is *gak gak, ngak ngak* and *wha wha*. Chimpanzees find these words sufficient for all practical purposes.

The Gorilla

After a Chimp the Gorilla is a great relief. He is fierce and brutal and is not a mimic. He weighs 450 pounds and is named Bobby. Young Gorillas are friendly but they soon learn. When a banana is placed in a trick box within easy reach the Gorilla will bite the professor's cousin. Guess what that proves. The Gorilla is becoming extinct but there are plenty of professors. In affairs of the heart the male Gorilla is slow but sure. He appears to be stolid and indifferent but that may be part of his system.* Believe it or not he is shy. The Gorilla is an introvert. Married females and their children sleep in trees and the male sleeps on the ground. The meaning of this is unknown. The Gorilla could do with more brains. His corpus callosum is not very good but the hippocampus major is O.K. The hallux is fair. Gorillas like sugar-cane, hay, watermelons, ragout of chicken, raw ham, dandelions and lollypops. They are subject to inflammation of the gums. Female Gorillas are likely to bump into passing objects and have trouble with revolving doors. I am in favor of Gorillas. They live in Africa.†

The Orang-Utan

Orang-utans teach us that looks are not everything but darned near it.‡ They look awful. Some Orang-utans have huge cheek pads and conspicuous laryngeal sacs. Others have worse. The hallux is undeveloped. The female is not so ugly but ugly enough. Both sexes brood a lot. Their prolonged spells of meditation appear to have no tangible results. Orangs often sleep on one arm and wake up with a cramp. They snore. Young Orangs who are permitted to develop their individualities turn out horribly. Young Orangs who are kicked and beaten into line also turn out horribly. The psychology of the Orang-utan has been

* The Gorilla is said to have hidden depths, but if they are so hidden what good are they? He has small ears, generally a bad sign.

† They have a nasty habit of biting shotguns.

‡ About 93 per cent.

thoroughly described by scientists from their observation of the Sea-urchin. Other facts have been gathered from the natives of Borneo and Sumatra who may have been talking about something else at the time. There is considerable doubt whether the Orang-utan is as dumb as he seems or dumber. He likes stewed apples, toast, cocoa and soap. Orang-utans have solved the problem of work. They do not work. They never worry. And yet they have wrinkles. So what's the use?

The Gibbon

Those thin long-waisted types with no head to speak of are generally Gibbons. Gibbons are our loudest Apes. Their peculiar cry is often described as *hoo hoo hoo hoo* and just as often as *whopp whopp whopp whopp*. Gibbons assemble in crowds and *hoo* or *whopp* until exhausted or shot. The natives of Cochin China, the Malay Archipelago and the Island of Hainan often have *hoo* or *whopp* madness. A noiseless Gibbon would be a god-send. There is an old saying that the Gibbon is at his best in the American Museum of Natural History.* The female Wau-wau or Silvery Gibbon of Java is rather pretty for a Wau-wau. The Hoolock of Upper Assam cannot swim. Gibbons are noted for the number and variety of things they cannot do. It is believed that the Gibbon could be taught to swat flies. Gibbons live in the treetops. They swing from branch to branch by their arms with amazing speed. They are not going to fires. They are going nowhere in particular. Experiments with the Gibbon prove many interesting things about the Long-nosed Bandicoot. Gibbon authorities do not know whether the Gibbon is interested in sex. But you know and I know. There are no Apes in this country, thank goodness.†

* Cf. "Decline and Fall of the Gibbon."

† Embalmed Gibbons are sometimes sold to country bumpkins as embalmed Pigmies. Why our rural population should prefer embalmed Pigmies to embalmed Gibbons offers an interesting problem in psychology.

The Baboon

The Baboon is entirely uncalled for. Some people like Baboons but something is wrong with such people. Baboons lose their tempers. There are more Baboons than you might think. The Baboon is not an Anthropoid Ape. He has a tail, though not a good one, and so he is a Lower Ape. In fact he is more of a Monkey. The Arabian Baboon as the name implies is found in Abyssinia. Baboons have highly colored ischial callosities. Scientists tell us that all animals who sit down a great deal have ischial callosities. That is a lie. The Mandrill is the worst especially when going South. Baboons bark. It seems as though there would be no female Baboons but there are. The family life of the Baboon is known as hell on earth. The males grow meaner and stingier and the females fade at an early age. The children scream, stamp, roll on the ground and will not eat their Centipedes. Their parents are proud of them.* The Sacred Baboon of the Egyptians was identified with Thoth, the god of literary criticism.† He spent his time making Thothlike motions at the Sacred Ibis, another form of literary criticism. He is not yet extinct. Never call anyone a Baboon unless you are sure of your facts. Baboons have flat feet.

The Howling Monkey

The Howling Monkey is confined to South America but seems to escape. The back of his head is straight up and down. His howl is caused by a large hyoid bone at the top of the trachea. It can be cured by a simple operation on the neck with an axe. The male Howler is always followed by seven or eight female Howlers with young Howlers but this may be a coincidence. Howlers have long prehensile tails with which they hang from

* Young Baboons ride pick-a-back.

† He is frequently pictured restoring the Udjat or Eye to Aah, the Moon God. Enormous numbers of Udjats have been found in ancient Egyptian tombs. "The twin Udjats represent the Eye of the Sun and the Eye of the Moon."—Sir E. A. Wallis Budge.

the trees, talk Monkey talk and pick up Brazil nuts. There are several species of Howlers. The Fat Howler is as trying as any. The Howling Monkey and the Spider Monkey are neighbors. The infant Howling Monkey occasionally bears a striking resemblance to a Spider Monkey. Ask me sometime why that is.* The Capuchin or Organ Grinder Monkey is regarded as very intelligent. He scrambles after pennies, scratches himself and has morals. He can stand on his hind legs but the tail is a dead giveaway.† Monkeys have loads of fun. They breed in captivity and know many other tricks. They are fond of Bats, marshmallows, Goldfish and ink. Old World Monkeys cannot hang by their tails. They might as well not be Monkeys.‡

The Lemur

The Lemur is one worse than the Monkey. He is often mistaken for a Squirrel, a Rabbit, an Agouti or anything but a Lemur. He has been described as a state of mind or ectoplasm. The Lemur is a Primate because people say so. The Lemur sleeps all day long and nobody tells him that he is a tramp. When disturbed he sort of squeaks. Most Lemurs live in Madagascar but they are never quite warm enough. The Ring-tailed Lemur or Madagascar Cat§ is caught by sailors who have enough Parrots already. The Gentle Lemur is devoted to his human keeper and often bites him severely. The Aye-aye has large movable ears caused by listening for Grubs. The Potto is rather peevish. The Spectral Tarsier of the West Indies is uncanny. He has huge bug-eyes, elongated ankles and knobby toes. He is sometimes confused with Delirium Tremens. Lemurs comb their hair with their lower front teeth. They mature almost instantaneously. In a way we came from Lemurs because they are also descended from an ex-

* Spider Monkeys look nothing like Spiders.

† The Tee-tee or Squirrel Monkey inhabits Brazil and the Reading Room of the British Museum.

‡ There is a general feeling among Old World Monkeys that they are the best Monkeys, but there is no scientific basis for this. If you are an Old World Monkey you are classed as Catarrhine or narrow-nosed. If not, you are Platyrrhine or broad-nosed. That's about the gist of it.

§ *Lemur, catta*.

tinct Tree Shrew something like a large Rat. From the Tree Shrew to the Dogfish is but a step, which practically brings us to the Amoeba. So perhaps the Lemur is to blame for it all.*

*Aristotle would not have known a Lemur if it came up and bit him. He had enough to keep track of, without Lemurs.

Father and His Hard-Rocking Ship

FATHER said that one great mystery about the monthly household expenses was what made them jump up and down so. "Anyone would suppose that there would be some regularity after a while which would let a man try to make plans, but I never know from one month to another what to expect."

Mother said she didn't, either. Things just seemed to go that way.

"But they have no business to go that way, Vinnie," Father declared. "And what's more I won't allow it."

Mother said she didn't see what she could do about it. All she knew was that when the bills mounted up, it didn't mean that she had been extravagant.

"Well, it certainly means that you've spent a devil of a lot of money," said Father.

Mother looked at him obstinately. She couldn't exactly deny this, but she said that it wasn't fair.

Appearances were often hopelessly against Mother but that never daunted her. She wasn't afraid of Father or anybody. She was a woman of great spirit who would have flown at and pecked any tyrant. It was only when she had a bad conscience that she had no heart to fight. Father had the best of her there because he never had a bad conscience. And he didn't know that he was a tyrant. He regarded himself as a long-suffering man who asked

From *Life with Father*, by Clarence Day; copyright 1934 by the author. Reprinted by permission of Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.

little of anybody, and who showed only the greatest moderation in his encounters with unreasonable beings like Mother. Mother's one advantage over him was that she was quicker. She was particularly elusive when Father was trying to hammer her into shape.

When the household expenses shot up very high, Father got frightened. He would then, as Mother put it, yell his head off. He always did some yelling anyhow, merely on general principles, but when his alarm was genuine he roared in real anguish.

Usually this brought the total down again, at least for a while. But there were times when no amount of noise seemed to do any good, and when every month for one reason or another the total went on up and up. And then, just as Father had almost resigned himself to this awful outgo, and just as he had eased up on his yelling and had begun to feel grim, the expenses, to his utter amazement, would take a sharp drop.

Mother didn't keep track of these totals, she was too busy watching small details, and Father never knew whether to tell her the good news or not. He always did tell her, because he couldn't keep things to himself. But he always had cause to regret it.

When he told her, he did it in as disciplinary a manner as possible. He didn't congratulate her on the expenses having come down. He appeared at the door, waving the bills at her with a threatening scowl, and said, "I've told you again and again that you could keep the expenses down if you tried, and this shows I was right."

Mother was always startled at such attacks, but she didn't lose her presence of mind. She asked how much less the amount was and said it was all due to her good management, of course, and Father ought to give her the difference.

At this point Father suddenly found himself on the defensive and the entire moral lecture that he had intended to deliver was wrecked. The more they talked, the clearer it seemed to Mother that he owed her that money. Only when he was lucky could he get out of her room without paying it.

He said that this was one of the things about her that was enough to drive a man mad.

The other thing was her lack of system, which was always cropping up in new ways. He sometimes looked at Mother as

though he had never seen her before. "Upon my soul," he said, "I almost believe you don't know what system is. You don't even want to know, either."

He had at last invented what seemed a perfect method of recording expenses. Whenever he gave any money to Mother, he asked her what it was for and made a note of it in his pocket notebook. His idea was that these items, added to those in the itemized bills, would show him exactly where every dollar had gone.

But they didn't.

He consulted his notebook. "I gave you six dollars in cash on the twenty-fifth of last month," he said, "to buy a new coffeepot."

"Yes," Mother said, "because you broke your old one. You threw it right on the floor."

Father frowned. "I'm not talking about that," he answered. "I am simply endeavoring to find out from you, if I can—"

"But it's so silly to break a nice coffeepot, Clare, and that was the last of those French ones, and there was nothing the matter with the coffee that morning; it was made just the same as it always is."

"It wasn't," said Father. "It was made in a damned barbaric manner."

"And I couldn't get another French one," Mother continued, "because that little shop the Auffmordts told us about has stopped selling them. They said the tariff wouldn't let them any more, and I told Monsieur Duval he ought to be ashamed of himself to stand there and say so. I said that if I had a shop, I'd like to see the tariff keep me from selling things."

"But I gave you six dollars to buy a new pot," Father firmly repeated, "and now I find that you apparently got one at Lewis & Conger's and charged it. Here's their bill: 'one brown earthenware drip coffeepot, five dollars.'"

"So I saved you a dollar," Mother triumphantly said, "and you can hand it right over to me."

"Bah! What nonsense you talk!" Father cried. "Is there no way to get this thing straightened out? What did you do with the six dollars?"

"Why, Clare! I can't tell you now, dear. Why didn't you ask at the time?"

"Oh, my God!" Father groaned.

"Wait a moment," said Mother. "I spent four dollars and a half for that new umbrella I told you I wanted, and you said I didn't need a new one, but I did, very much."

Father got out his pencil and wrote "New Umbrella for V." in his notebook.

"And that must have been the week," Mother went on, "that I paid Mrs. Tobin for two extra days' washing, so that was two dollars more out of it, which makes it six-fifty. There's another fifty cents that you owe me."

"I don't owe you anything," Father said. "You have managed to turn a coffeepot for me into a new umbrella for you. No matter what I give you money for, you buy something else with it, and if this is to keep on, I might as well not keep account books at all."

"I'd like to see you run this house without having any money on hand for things," Mother said.

"I am not made of money," Father replied. "You seem to think I only have to put my hand in my pocket to get some."

Mother not only thought this, she knew it. His wallet always was full. That was the provoking part of it—she knew he had the money right there, but he tried to keep from giving it to her. She had to argue it out of him.

"Well, you can put your hand in your pocket and give me that dollar-fifty this minute," she said. "You owe me that, anyhow."

Father said he didn't have a dollar-fifty to spare and tried to get back to his desk, but Mother wouldn't let him go till he paid her. She said she wouldn't put up with injustice.

Mother said it hampered her dreadfully never to have any cash. She was always having to pay out small amounts for demands that she had forgot to provide for, and in such emergencies the only way to do was to juggle things around. One result, however, of all these more or less innocent shifts was that in this way she usually took care of all her follies herself. All the small ones, at any rate. They never got entered on Father's books, except when they were monstrous.

She came home one late afternoon in a terrible state. "Has it come yet?" she asked the waitress.

The waitress said nothing had come that she knew of.

Mother ran upstairs with a hunted expression and flung herself down on her bed. When we looked in, she was sobbing.

It turned out that she had gone to an auction, and she had become so excited that she had bought but not paid for a grandfather's clock.

Mother knew in her heart that she had no business going to auctions. She was too suggestible, and if an hypnotic auctioneer once got her eye, she was lost. Besides, an auction aroused all her worst instincts—her combativeness, her recklessness, and her avaricious love of a bargain. And the worst of it was that this time it wasn't a bargain at all. At least she didn't think it was now. The awful old thing was about eight feet tall, and it wasn't the one she had wanted. It wasn't half as nice as the clock that old Miss Van Derwent had bought. And inside the hood over the dial, she said, there was a little ship which at first she hadn't noticed, a horrid ship that rocked up and down every time the clock ticked. It made her ill just to look at it. And she didn't have the money, and the man said he'd have to send it this evening, and what would Father say?

She came down to dinner, and left half-way through. Couldn't stand it. But an hour or two later, when the doorbell rang, she bravely went to tell Father.

She could hardly believe it, but she found that luck was with her, for once. If the clock had come earlier, there might have been a major catastrophe, but Father was in a good mood and he had had a good dinner. And though he never admitted it or spoke of it, he had a weakness for clocks. There were clocks all over the house, which he would allow no one to wind but himself. Every Sunday between breakfast and church he made the rounds, setting them at the right time by his infallible watch, regulating their speed, and telling us about every clock's little idiosyncrasies. When he happened to be coming downstairs on the hour, he cocked his ear, watch in hand, to listen to as many of them as he could, in the hope that they would all strike at once. He would reprove the impulsive pink clock in the spare room for striking too soon, and the big solemn clock in the dining-room for being a minute too late.

So when Mother led him out in the hall to confess to him and

show him what she had bought, and he saw it was a clock, he fell in love with it and made almost no fuss at all.

The let-down was too much for Mother. She tottered off to her room without another word and went straight to bed, leaving Father and the auctioneer's man setting up the new clock alongside the hatrack. Father was especially fascinated by the hard-rocking ship.

mehitabels extensive past

mehitabel the cat claims that
she has a human soul
also and has transmigrated
from body to body and it
may be so boss you
remember i told you she accused
herself of being cleopatra once i
asked her about antony

anthony who she asked me are
you thinking of that
song about rowley and gammon and
spinach heigho for anthony rowley

no i said mark antony the
great roman the friend of
caesar surely cleopatra you
remember j caesar

listen archy she said i
have been so many different
people in my time and met
so many prominent gentlemen i

From *archy and mehitabel*, by Don Marquis; copyright 1927 by Doubleday and Company, Inc.

wont lie to you or stall i
do get my dates mixed sometimes
think of how much i have had a
chance to forget and i have
always made a point of not
carrying grudges over
from one life to the next archy
i have been
used something fierce in my time but
i am no bum sport archy
i am a free spirit archy i
look on myself as being
quite a romantic character oh the
queens i have been and the
swell feeds i have ate
a cockroach which you are
and a poet which you used to be
archy couldn't understand
my feelings at having come
down to this i have
had bids to elegant feeds where poets
and cockroaches would
neither one be mentioned without a
laugh archy i have had
adventures but i
have never been an adventuress
one life up and the next life
down archy but always a lady
through it all and a
good mixer too always the
life of the party archy but never
anything vulgar always free footed
archy never tied down to
a job or housework yes looking
back on it all i can say is
i had some romantic
lives and some elegant times i
have seen better days archy but
whats the use of kicking kid its

all in the game like a gentleman
friend of mine used to say
toujours gai kid toujours gai he
was an elegant cat he used
to be a poet himself and he made up
some elegant poetry about me and him

lets hear it i said and
mehitabel recited

persian pussy from over the sea
demure and lazy and smug and fat
none of your ribbons and bells for me
ours is the zest of the alley cat
over the roofs from flat to flat
we prance with capers corybantic
what though a boot should break a slat
mehitabel us for the life romantic

we would rather be rowdy and gaunt and free
and dine on a diet of roach and rat

roach i said what do you
mean roach interrupting mehitabel
yes roach she said thats the
way my boy friend made it up
i climbed in amongst the typewriter
keys for she had an excited
look in her eyes go on mehitabel i
said feeling safer and she
resumed her elocution

we would rather be rowdy and gaunt and free
and dine on a diet of roach and rat
than slaves to a tame society
ours is the zest of the alley cat
fish heads freedom a frozen sprat
dug from the gutter with digits frantic
is better than bores and a fireside mat
mehitabel us for the life romantic

when the pendant moon in the leafless tree
clings and sways like a golden bat
i sing its light and my love for thee
ours is the zest of the alley cat
missiles around us fall rat a tat tat
but our shadows leap in a ribald antic
as over the fences the world cries scat
mehitabel us for the life romantic.

persian princess i dont care that
for your pedigree traced by scribes pedantic
ours is the zest of the alley cat
mehitabel us for the life romantic

aint that high brow stuff
archy i always remembered it
but he was an elegant gent
even if he was a highbrow and a
regular bohemian archy him and
me went aboard a canal boat
one day and he got his head into
a pitcher of cream and couldn't get
it out and fell overboard
he come up once before he
drowned toujours gai kid he
gurgled and then sank for ever that
was always his words archy toujours
gai kid tourjours gai i
have known some swell gents
in my time dearie

Country Full of Swedes

THERE I was, standing in the middle of the chamber, trembling like I was coming down with the flu, and still not knowing what god-awful something had happened. In all my days in the Back Kingdom, I never heard such noises so early in the forenoon.

It was about half an hour after sun-rise, and a gun went off like a coffer-dam breaking up under ice at twenty below, and I'd swear it sounded like it wasn't any farther away than my feet are from my head. That gun shot off, pitching me six-seven inches off the bed, and, before I could come down out of the air, there was another roar like somebody coughing through a megaphone, with a two weeks' cold, right in my ear. God-helping, I hope I never get waked up like that again until I can get myself home to the Back Kingdom where I rightfully belong to stay.

I must have stood there ten-fifteen minutes shivering in my night-shirt, my heart pounding inside of me like a ram-rod working on a plugged-up bore, and listening for that gun again, if it was going to shoot some more. A man never knows what's going to happen next in the State of Maine; that's why I wish sometimes I'd never left the Back Kingdom to begin with. I was making sixty a month, with the best of bed and board, back there in the intervale; but like a God damn fool I had to jerk loose and came down here near the Bay. I'm going back where I came from, God-helping; I've never had a purely calm and peaceful

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day since I got here three-four years ago. This is the damnedest country for the unexpected raising of all kinds of unlooked-for hell a man is apt to run across in a lifetime of traveling. If a man's born and raised in the Back Kingdom, he ought to stay there where he belongs; that's what I'd done if I'd had the sense to stay out of this down-country near the Bay, where you don't ever know, God-helping, what's going to happen next, where, or when.

But there I was, standing in the middle of the upstairs chamber, shaking like a rag weed in an August wind-storm, and not knowing what minute, maybe right at me, that gun was going to shoot off again, for all I knew. Just then, though, I heard Jim and Mrs. Frost trip-trapping around downstairs in their bare feet. Even if I didn't know what god-awful something had happened, I knew things around the place weren't calm and peaceful, like they generally were of a Sunday morning in May, because it took a stiff mixture of heaven and hell to get Jim and Mrs. Frost up and out of a warm bed before six of a forenoon, any of the days of the week.

I ran to the window and stuck my head out as far as I could get it, to hear what the trouble was. Everything out there was as quiet and peaceful as midnight on a backroad in the middlemost winter. But I knew something was up, because Jim and Mrs. Frost didn't make a practice of getting up and out of a warm bed that time of forenoon in the chillish May-time.

There wasn't any sense in me standing there in the cold air shivering in my night-shirt, so I put on my clothes, whistling all the time through my teeth to drive away the chill, and trying to figure out what God damn fool was around so early shooting off a gun of a Sunday morning. Just then I heard the downstairs door open, and up the steps, two at a time, came Jim in his breeches and his shirt-tail flying out behind him.

He wasn't long in coming up the stairs, for a man sixty-seven, but before he reached the door to my room, that gun went off again: BOOM! Just like that; and the echo came rolling back through the open window from the hills: Boom! Boom! Like fireworks going off with your eyes shut. Jim had busted through the door already, but when he heard that Boom! sound he sort of spun around, like a cock-eyed weathervane, five-six times, and

ran out the door again like he had been shot in the hind parts with a moose gun. That *Boom!* so early in the forenoon was enough to scare the daylights out of any man, and Jim wasn't any different from me or anybody else in the town of East Joloppi. He just turned around and jumped through the door to the first tread on the stairway like his mind was made up to go somewhere else in a hurry, and no fooling around at the start.

I'd been hired to Jim and Mrs. Frost for all of three-four years, and I was near about as much of a Frost, excepting name, as Jim himself was. Jim and me got along first-rate together, doing chores and haying and farm work in general, because neither one of us was ever trying to make the other do more of the work. We were hitched to make a fine team, and I never had a kick coming, and Jim said he didn't either. Jim had the name of Frost, to be sure, but I wouldn't ever hold that against a man.

The echo of that gun-shot was still rolling around in the hills and coming in through the window, when all at once that god-awful cough-like whoop through a megaphone sounded again right there in the room and everywhere else, like it might have been, in the whole town of East Joloppi. The man or beast or whatever animal he was who hollered like that ought to be locked up to keep him from scaring all the women and children to death, and it wasn't any stomach-comforting sound for a grown man who's used to the peaceful calm of the Back Kingdom all his life to hear so early of a Sunday forenoon, either.

I jumped to the door where Jim, just a minute before, leaped through. He didn't stop till he got clear to the bottom of the stairs. He stood there, looking up at me like a wild-eyed cow moose surprised in the sheriff's corn field.

"Who fired that god-awful shot, Jim?" I yelled at him, leaping down the stairs quicker than a man of my years ought to let himself do.

"Good God!" Jim said, his voice hoarse, and falling all to pieces like a stump of punk-wood. "The Swedes! The Swedes are shooting, Stan!"

"What Swedes, Jim—those Swedes who own the farm and buildings across the road over there?" I said, trying to find the buttonholes in my shirt. "Have they come back here to live on that farm?"

"Good God, yes!" he said, his voice croaking deep down in his throat, like he had swallowed too much water. "The Swedes are all over the place. They're everywhere you can see, there's that many of them."

"What's their name, Jim?" I asked him. "You and Mrs. Frost never told me what their name is."

"Good God, I don't know. I never heard them called anything but Swedes, and that's what it is, I guess. It ought to be that, if it ain't."

I ran across the hall to look out a window, but it was on the wrong side of the house, and I couldn't see a thing. Mrs. Frost was stepping around in the downstairs chamber, locking things up in the drawers and closet and forgetting where she was hiding the keys. I could see her through the open door, and she was more scared-looking than Jim was. She was so scared of the Swedes she didn't know what she was doing, none of the time.

"What made those Swedes come back for, Jim?" I said to him. "I thought you said they were gone for good, this time."

"Good God, Stan," he said, "I don't know what they came back for. I guess hard times are bringing everybody back to the land, and the Swedes are always in the front rush of everything. I don't know what brought them back, but they're all over the place, shooting and yelling and raising hell. There are thirty-fourty of them, looks like to me, counting everything with heads."

"What are they doing now, Jim, except yelling and shooting?"

"Good God," Jim said, looking behind him to see what Mrs. Frost was doing with his things in the downstairs chamber. "I don't know what they're not doing. But I can hear them, Stan! You hurry out right now and lock up all the tools in the barn and bring in the cows and tie them up in the stalls. I've got to hurry out now and bring in all of those new cedar fence posts across the front of the yard before they start pulling them up and carrying them off. Good God, Stan, the Swedes are everywhere you look out-doors! We've got to make haste, Stan!"

Jim ran to the side door and out the back of the house, but I took my time about going. I wasn't scared of the Swedes, like Jim and Mrs. Frost were, and I didn't aim to have Jim putting me to doing tasks and chores, or anything else, before breakfast and the proper time. I wasn't any more scared of the Swedes

than I was of the Finns and Portuguese, anyway. It's a god-awful shame for Americans to let Swedes and Finns and the Portuguese scare the daylight out of them. God-helping, they are no different than us, and you never see a Finn or a Swede scared of an American. But people like Jim and Mrs. Frost are scared to death of Swedes and other people from the old countries; Jim and Mrs. Frost and people like that never stop to think that all of us Americans came over from the old countries, one time or another, to begin with.

But there wasn't any sense in trying to argue with Jim and Mrs. Frost right then, when the Swedes, like a fired nest of yellow-headed bumble bees, were swarming all over the place as far as the eye could see, and when Mrs. Frost was scared to death that they were coming into the house and carry out all of her and Jim's furniture and household goods. So while Mrs. Frost was tying her and Jim's shoes in pillow cases and putting them out of sight in closets and behind beds, I went to the kitchen window and looked out to see what was going on around that tall yellow house across the road.

Jim and Mrs. Frost both were right about there being Swedes all over the place. God-helping, there were Swedes all over the country, near about all over the whole town of East Joloppi, for what I could see out the window. They were as thick around the barn and pump and the woodpile as if they had been a nest of yellow-headed bumble bees strewn over the countryside. There were Swedes everywhere a man could see, and the ones that couldn't be seen, could be heard yelling their heads off inside the yellow clapboarded house across the road. There wasn't any mistake about their being Swedes there, either; because I've never yet seen a man who mistakes a Swede or a Finn for an American. Once you see a Finn or a Swede you know, God-helping, that he is a Swede or a Finn, and not a Portugee or an American.

There was a Swede everywhere a man could look. Some of them were little Swedes, and women Swedes, to be sure; but little Swedes, in the end, and women Swedes too, near about, grow up as big as any of them. When you come right down to it, there's no sense in counting out the little Swedes and the women Swedes.

Out in the road in front of their house were seven-eight autos

and trucks loaded down with furniture and household goods. All around, everything was Swedes. The Swedes were yelling and shouting at one another, the little Swedes and the women Swedes just as loud as the big Swedes, and it looked like none of them knew what all the shouting and yelling was for, and when they found out, they didn't give a damn about it. That was because all of them were Swedes. It didn't make any difference what a Swede was yelling about; just as long as he had leave to open his mouth, he was tickled to death about it.

I have never seen the like of so much yelling and shouting anywhere else before; but down here in the State of Maine, in the down-country on the Bay, there's no sense in being taken-back at the sights to be seen, because anything on God's green earth is likely and liable to happen between day and night, and the other way around, too.

Now, you take the Finns; there's any God's number of them around in the woods, where you least expect to see them, logging and such. When a Finn crew breaks a woods camp, it looks like there's a Finn for every tree in the whole State, but you don't see them going around making the noise that Swedes do, with all their yelling and shouting and shooting off guns. Finns are quiet about their hell-raising. The Portuguese are quiet, too; you see them tramping around, minding their own business, and working hard on a river dam or something, but you never hear them shouting and yelling and shooting off guns at five-six of a Sunday morning. There's no known likeness to the noise that a houseful of Swedes can make when they get to yelling and shouting at one another early in the forenoon.

I was standing there all that time, looking out the window at the Swedes across the road, when Jim came into the kitchen with an armful of wood and threw it into the woodbox behind the range.

"Good God, Stan," Jim said, "the Swedes are everywhere you can look out-doors. They're not going to get that armful of wood, anyway, though."

Mrs. Frost came to the door and stood looking like she didn't know it was her business to cook breakfast for Jim and me. I made a fire in the range and put on a pan of water to boil for the coffee. Jim kept running to the window to look out, and there

wasn't much use in expecting Mrs. Frost to start cooking unless somebody set her to it, in the shape she was in, with all the Swedes around the place. She was so upset, it was a downright pity to look at her. But Jim and me had to eat, and I went and took her by the arm and brought her to the range and left her standing there so close she would get burned if she didn't stir around and make breakfast.

"Good God, Stan," Jim said, "those Swedes are into everything. They're in the barn, and in the pasture running the cows, and I don't know what else they've been into since I looked last. They'll take the tools and the horses and cows, and the cedar posts, too, if we don't get out there and put everything under lock and key."

"Now, hold on, Jim," I said, looking out the window. "Them you see are little Swedes out there, and they're not going to make off with anything of yours and Mrs. Frost's. The big Swedes are busy carrying in furniture and household goods. Those Swedes aren't going to tamper with anything of yours and Mrs. Frost's. They're people just like us. They don't go around stealing everything in sight. Now, let's just sit here by the window and watch them while Mrs. Frost is getting breakfast ready."

"Good God, Stan, they're Swedes," Jim said, "and they're moving into the house across the road. I've got to put everything under lock and key before—"

"Hold on, Jim," I told him. "It's their house they're moving into. God-helping, they're not moving into your and Jim's house, are they, Mrs. Frost?"

"Jim," Mrs. Frost said, shaking her finger at him and looking at me wild-eyed and sort of flustered-like, "Jim, don't you sit there and let Stanley stop you from saving the stock and tools. Stanley doesn't know the Swedes like we do. Stanley came down here from the Back Kingdom, and he doesn't know anything about Swedes."

Mrs. Frost was partly right, because I've never seen the things in my whole life that I've seen down here near the Bay; but there wasn't any sense in Americans like Jim and Mrs. Frost being scared of Swedes. I've seen enough Finns and Portuguese in my time in the Back Kingdom, up in the intervale, to know that Americans are no different from the others.

"Now, you hold on a while, Jim," I said. "Swedes are no different than Finns. Finns don't go around stealing another man's stock and tools. Up in the Back Kingdom the Finns are the finest kind of neighbors."

"That may be so up in the Back Kingdom, Stan," Jim said, "but Swedes down here near the Bay are nothing like anything that's ever been before or since. Those Swedes over there across the road work in a pulp mill over to Waterville three-four years, and when they've got enough money saved up, or when they lose it all, as the case may be, they all move back here to East Joloppi on this farm of theirs for two-three years at a time. That's what they do. And they've been doing it for the past thirty-forty years, ever since I can remember, and they haven't changed none in all that time. I can recall the first time they came to East Joloppi; they built that house across the road then, and if you've ever seen a sight like Swedes building a house in a hurry, you haven't got much else to live for. Why! Stan, those Swedes built that house in four-five days—just like that! I've never seen the equal to it. Of course now, Stan, it's the damndest-looking house a man ever saw, because it's not a farm house, and it's not a city house, and it's no kind of a house an American would erect. Why! those Swedes threw that house together in four-five days—just like that! But whoever saw a house like that before, with three stories to it, and only six rooms in the whole building! And painted yellow, too; Good God, Stan, white is the only color to paint a house, and those Swedes went and painted it yellow. Then on top of that, they went and painted the barn red. And of all of the shouting and yelling, at all times of the day and night, a man never saw or heard before. Those Swedes acted like they were purely crazy for the whole of four-five days, and they were, and they still are. But what gets me is the painting of it yellow, and the making of it three stories high, with only six rooms in the whole building. Nobody but Swedes would go and do a thing like that; an American would have built a farm house, here in the country, resting square on the ground, with one story, maybe a story and a half, and then painted it lead-white. But Good God, Stan, those fool Swedes had to put up three stories, to hold six rooms, and then went and painted the building yellow."

"Swedes are a little queer, sometimes," I said. "But Finns and Portuguese are too, Jim. And Americans sometimes—"

"A little queer!" Jim said. "Why! Good God, Stan, the Swedes are the queerest people on the earth, if that's the right word for them. You don't know Swedes, Stan. This is the first time you've ever seen those Swedes across the road, and that's why you don't know what they're like after being shut up in a pulpwood mill over to Waterville for four-five years. They're purely wild, I tell you, Stan. They don't stop for anything they set their heads on. If you was to walk out there now and tell them to move their autos and trucks off of the town road so the travelers could get past without having to drive around through the brush, they'd tear you apart, they're that wild, after being shut up in the pulp mill over to Waterville these three-four, maybe four-five, years."

"Finns get that way, too," I tried to tell Jim. "After Finns have been shut up in a woods camp all winter, they make a lot of noise when they get out. Everybody who has to stay close to the job for three-four years likes to act free when he gets out from under the job. Now, Jim, you take the Portuguese—"

"Don't you sit there, Jim, and let Stanley keep you from putting the tools away," Mrs. Frost said. "Stanley doesn't know the Swedes like we do. He's lived up in the Back Kingdom most of his life, tucked away in the intervale, and he's never seen Swedes—"

"Good God, Stan," Jim said, standing up, he was that nervous and upset, "the Swedes are over-running the whole country. I'll bet there are more Swedes in the town of East Joloppi than there are in the rest of the country. Everybody knows there's more Swedes in the State of Maine than there are in the old country. Why! Stan, they take to this State like potato bugs take to—"

"Don't you sit there and let Stanley keep you back, Jim," Mrs. Frost put in again. "Stanley doesn't know the Swedes like we do. Stanley's lived up there in the Back Kingdom most of his life."

Just then one of the big Swedes started yelling at some of the little Swedes and women Swedes. I'll swear, those big Swedes sounded like a pastureful of hoarse bulls, near the end of May,

mad about the black-flies. God-helping, they yelled like they were fixing to kill all the little Swedes and women Swedes they could get their hands on. It didn't amount to anything, though; because the little Swedes and the women Swedes yelled right back at them just like they had been big Swedes too. The little Swedes and women Swedes couldn't yell hoarse bull bass, but it was close enough to it to make a man who's lived most of his life up in the Back Kingdom, in the intervale, think that the whole town of East Joloppi was full of big Swedes.

Jim was all for getting out after the tools and stock right away, but I pulled him back to the table. I wasn't going to let Jim and Mrs. Frost set me to doing tasks and chores before breakfast and the regular time. Forty dollars a month isn't much to pay a man for ten-eleven hours' work a day, including Sundays, when the stock has to be attended to like any other day, and I set myself that I wasn't going to work twelve-thirteen hours a day for them, even if I was practically one of the Frosts myself, except in name, by that time.

"Now, hold on a while, Jim," I said. "Let's just sit here by the window and watch them carry their furniture and household goods inside while Mrs. Frost's getting the cooking ready to eat. If they start taking off any of you and Mrs. Frost's things, we can see them just as good from here by the window as we could out there in the yard and road."

"Now, Jim, I'm telling you," Mrs. Frost said, shaking all over, and not even trying to cook us a meal, "don't you sit there and let Stanley keep you from saving the stock and tools. Stanley doesn't know the Swedes like we do. He thinks they're like everybody else."

Jim wasn't for staying in the house when all of his tools were lying around in the yard, and while his cows were in the pasture unprotected, but he saw how it would be better to wait where we could hurry up Mrs. Frost with the cooking, if we were ever going to eat breakfast that forenoon. She was so excited and nervous about the Swedes moving back to East Joloppi from the pulp mill in Waterville that she hadn't got the beans and brown bread fully heated from the night before, and we had to sit and eat them cold.

We were sitting there by the window eating the cold beans and

brown bread, and watching the Swedes, when two of the little Swedes started running across Jim and Mrs. Frost's lawn. They were chasing one of their big yellow tom cats they had brought with them from Waterville. The yellow tom was as large as an eight-months collie puppy, and he ran like he was on fire and didn't know how to put it out. His great big bushy tail stuck straight up in the air behind him, like a flag, and he was leaping over the lawn like a devilish calf, new-born.

Jim and Mrs. Frost saw the little Swedes and the big yellow tom cat at the same time I did.

"Good God," Jim shouted, raising himself part out of the chair. "Here they come now!"

"Hold on now, Jim," I said, pulling him back to the table. "They're only chasing one of their tom cats. They're not after taking anything that belongs to you and Mrs. Frost. Let's just sit here and finish eating the beans, and watch them out the window."

"My crown in heaven!" Mrs. Frost cried out, running to the window and looking through. "Those Swedes are going to kill every plant on the place. They'll dig up all the bulbs and pull up all the vines in the flower bed."

"Now you just sit and calm yourself, Mrs. Frost," I told her. "Those little Swedes are just chasing a tom cat. They're not after doing hurt to your flowers."

The big Swedes were unloading the autos and trucks and carrying the furniture and household goods into their three story, yellow clapboarded house. None of them was paying any attention to the little Swedes chasing the yellow tom over Jim and Mrs. Frost's lawn.

Just then the kitchen door burst open, and the two little Swedes stood there looking at us, panting and blowing their heads off.

Mrs. Frost took one look at them, and then she let out a yell, but the kids didn't notice her at all.

"Hey," one of them shouted, "come out here and help us get the cat. He climbed up in one of your trees."

By that time, Mrs. Frost was all for slamming the door in their faces, but I pushed in front of her and went out into the yard with them. Jim came right behind me, after he had finished

calming Mrs. Frost, and telling her we wouldn't let the Swedes come and carry out her furniture and household goods.

The yellow tom was all the way up in one of Jim's young maple shade trees. The maple wasn't strong enough to support even the smallest of the little Swedes, if he should take it into his head to climb to the top after the cat, and neither Jim nor me was hurting ourselves trying to think of a way to get the feline down. We were all for letting the cat stay where he was, till he got ready to come down of his own free will, but the little Swedes couldn't wait for anything. They wanted the tom right away, then and there, and no wasting of time in getting him.

"You boys go home and wait for the cat to come down," Jim told them. "There's no way to make him come down now, till he gets ready to come down of his own mind."

But no, those two boys were little Swedes. They weren't thinking of going back home till they got the yellow tom down from the maple. One of them ran to the tree, before Jim or me could head him off, and started shinnying up it like a pop-eyed squirrel. In no time, it seemed to me like, he was up amongst the limbs, jumping around up there from one limb to another like he had been brought up in just such a tree.

"Good God, Stan," Jim said, "can't you keep them out of the trees?"

There was no answer for that, and Jim knew there wasn't. There's no way of stopping a Swede from doing what he has set his head on doing.

The boy got almost to the top branch, where the yellow tom was clinging and spitting, when the tree began to bend toward the house. I knew what was coming, if something wasn't done about it pretty quick, and so did Jim. Jim saw his young maple shade tree begin to bend, and he almost had a fit looking at it. He ran to the lumber stack and came back dragging two lengths of two-by-fours. He got them set up against the tree before it had time to do any splitting, and then we stood there, like two damn fools, shoring up the tree and yelling at the little Swede to come down out of there before we broke his neck for being up in it.

The big Swedes across the road heard the fuss we were making,

and they came running out of that three story, six room house like it had been on fire inside.

"Good God, Stan," Jim shouted at me, "here comes the Swedes!"

"Don't turn and run off, Jim," I cautioned him, yanking him back by his coat-tail. "They're not wild beasts; we're not scared of them. Hold on where you are, Jim."

I could see Mrs. Frost's head almost breaking through the window-glass in the kitchen. She was all for coming out and driving the Swedes off her lawn and out of her flowers, but she was too scared to unlock the kitchen door and open it.

Jim was getting ready to run again, when he saw the Swedes coming toward us like a nest of yellow-headed bumble bees, but I wasn't scared of them, and I held on to Jim's coat-tail and told him I wasn't. Jim and me were shoring up the young maple, and I knew if one of us let go, the tree would bend to the ground right away and split wide open right up the middle. There was no sense in ruining a young maple shade tree like that, and I told Jim there wasn't.

"Hey," one of the big Swedes shouted at the little Swede up in the top of the maple, "come down out of that tree and go home to your mother."

"Aw, to hell with the old lady," the little Swede shouted down. "I'm getting the cat by the tail."

The big Swede looked at Jim and me. Jim was almost ready to run again by that time, but I wasn't, and I held him and told him I wasn't. There was no sense in letting the Swedes scare the daylights out of us.

"What in hell can you do with kids when they get that age?" he asked Jim and me.

Jim was all for telling him to make the boy come down out of the maple before it bent over and split wide open, but I knew there was no sense in trying to make him come down out of there until he got good and ready to come, or else got the yellow tom by the tail.

Just then another big Swede came running out of that three story, six room house across the road, holding a double-bladed ax out in front of him, like it was a red-hot poker, and yelling for all he was worth at the other Swedes.

"Good God, Stan," Jim said, "don't let those Swedes cut down my young maple!"

I had lots better sense than to try to make the Swedes stop doing what they had set their heads on doing. A man would be purely a fool to stop it from raining from above when it got ready to, even if he was trying to get his corn crop planted.

I looked around again, and there was Mrs. Frost all but popping through the window-glass. I could see what she was thinking, but I couldn't hear a word she was saying. It was good and plenty though, whatever it was.

"Come down out of that tree!" the Swede yelled at the boy up in Jim's maple.

Instead of starting to climb down, the little Swede reached up for the big yellow tom cat's tail. The tom reached out a big fat paw and harried the boy five-six times, just like that, quicker than the eye could follow. The kid let out a yell and a shout that must have been heard all the way to the other side of town, sounding like a whole houseful of Swedes up in the maple.

The big Swede covered the distance to the tree in one stride, pushing everything behind him.

"Good God, Stan," Jim shouted at me, "we've got to do something!"

There wasn't anything a man could do, unless he was either a Swede himself, or a man of prayer. Americans like Jim and me had no business getting in a Swede's way, especially when he was swinging a big double-bladed ax, and he just out of a pulp mill after being shut up making paper four-five years.

The big Swede grabbed the ax and let go at the trunk of the maple with it. There was no stopping him then, because he had the ax going, and it was whipping around his shoulders like a cow's tail in a swarm of black-flies. The little maple shook all over every time the ax-blade struck it, like wind blowing a corn stalk, and then it began to bend on the other side from Jim and me where we were shoring it up with the two-by-fours. Chips as big as dinner plates were flying across the lawn and pelting the house like a gang of boys stoning telephone insulators. One of those big dinner-plate chips crashed through the window where Mrs. Frost was, about that time. Both Jim and me thought at first she had fallen through the window, but when we looked

again, we could see that she was still on the inside, and madder than ever at the Swedes.

The two-by-fours weren't any good any longer, because it was too late to get to the other side of the maple in time to keep it from bending in that direction. The Swede with the double-bladed ax took one more swing, and the tree began to bend toward the ground.

The tree came down, the little Swede came down, and the big yellow tom came down on top of everything, holding for all he was worth to the top of the little Swede's head. Long before the tree and the boy struck the ground, the big yellow tom had sprung what looked like thirty feet, and landed in the middle of Mrs. Frost's flowers and bulbs. The little Swede let out a yell and a whoop when he hit the ground that brought out six-seven more Swedes from that three story, six room house, piling out into the road like it was the first time they had ever heard a kid bawl. The women Swedes and the little Swedes and the big Swedes piled out on Jim and Mrs. Frost's front lawn like they had been dropped out of a dump-truck and didn't know which was straight up from straight down.

I thought Mrs. Frost was going to have a fit right then and there in the kitchen window. When she saw that swarm of Swedes coming across her lawn, and the big yellow tom cat in her flower bed among the tender plants and bulbs, digging up the things she had planted, and the Swedes with their No. 12 heels squashing the green shoots she had been nursing along—well, I guess she just sort of caved in, and fell out of sight for the time being. I didn't have time to run to see what was wrong with her, because Jim and me had to tear out behind the tom and the Swedes to try to save as much as we could.

"Good God, Stan," Jim shouted at me, "go run in the house and ring up all the neighbors on the line, and tell them to hurry over here and help us before the Swedes wreck my farm and buildings. There's no telling what they'll do next. They'll be setting fire to the house and barn the next thing, maybe. Hurry, Stan!"

I didn't have time to waste talking to the neighbors on the telephone line. I was right behind Jim and the Swedes to see what they were going to do next.

"I pay you good pay, Stan," Jim said, "and I want my money's worth. Now, you go ring up the neighbors and tell them to hurry."

The big yellow tom made one spring when he hit the flower bed, and that leap landed him over the stonewall. He struck out for the deep woods with every Swede on the place behind him. When Jim and me got to the stonewall, I pulled up short and held Jim back.

"Well, Jim," I said, "if you want me to, I'll go down in the woods and raise hell with every Swede on the place for cutting down your young maple and tearing up Mrs. Frost's flower-bed."

We turned around and there was Mrs. Frost, right behind us. There was no knowing how she got there so quick after the Swedes had left for the woods.

"My crown in heaven," Mrs. Frost said, running up to Jim and holding on to him. "Jim, don't let Stanley make the Swedes mad. This is the only place we have got to live in, and they'll be here a year now this time, maybe two-three, if the hard times don't get better soon."

"That's right, Stan," he said. "You don't know the Swedes like we do. You would have to be a Swede yourself to know what to tell them. Don't go over there doing anything like that."

"God-helping, Jim," I said, "you and Mrs. Frost ain't scared of the Swedes, are you?"

"Good God, no," he said, his eyes popping out; "but don't go making them mad."

MILT GROSS

Hiawatta, Witt No Odder Poem

ON DE shurrs from Gettchy Goony,
Stoot a tipee witt a weegwom
Frontage feefty fitt it mashed
Hopen fireplaze—izzy payments

On de muggidge izzy payments
For one femily a weegwom
In de liss a cluzz "No cheeldren,"
Stoot a warning "Hedults honly."

Fifteen meenits from de station
From de station jost a stun's trow
Fifteen meenits like de bull flies
In de beck a two car gerredge
Gave a leff "Ha ha,"
De wodder—

Smooked de Chiff a pipe tebecca
Opp it rose from smoke a wapor
Clouts from smoke de hair assended
Like by Yellowstun de Kaiser

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Like a hoil-well wot it goshes
Goshes in de hedwertisements
On de coicular it goshes
Ruzz de smoke opp, high witt deezy

Grebbebed de boids witt bists de gezzmesks
Flad de rebbit witt de roeback
Bonded like a strick from lightning
Grissed wit griss, a strick from lightning

Gave de bear a ronning brudd-jomp
Gave de helk witt deer a high-dife
Gave a baiting beauty high-dife,
Witt de hentlers in de wodder.

Loud a yell de skonk gave; "Kamerad"
Poffed witt pented hall de critchures
Hout from bratt dey poffed witt pented
In de woots expheexiated

Smooked de Chiff de pipe tebecca
It should be de smook a tsignal
All de tripes should hev a mitting
In de forest fumigated

So de beeg Chiff gave a mitting
From de tripes it came de pipple
To de mitting—in de pow-pow
Came de Chiffs und came de Sockems

Came de skwuzz witt de cabosses
To de mitting
Grad-u-ally—
In de trizz it strimmed de brizzes

Gave a leff "ha ha" de wodder
Gave de Chiff a knock de gravel
From de mitting rad de minutes
From de lest wicks mitting mínutes

How it made de Chiff a notion
 Pessed witt sacunded de notion
 Pessed witt wotes witt razzelutions
 Pessed a sluggan "Boost Kiwanis"
 Brutt befur de Board new beezness

Opp it rose Chiff Wreenkled Deesh-Pen
 Hancient chiff from furr-scur weenters
 Not forgatting hall de sommers
 Ploss a copple spreengs witt hutsums

In de weend it wafed de wheeskers
 Like a proon de faze resambled
 From de faze from Wreenkled Deesh-Pen
 Eef it laid out in a straight line

Hend to hend would rich de wreenkles
 From New Yuk to Pessadinna
 Pessadinna, Kellifurnia
 Gave de Chiff a hexclamation
 "Hock ye! Hock ye—Nubble worriers
 In de willage, in de weegwom
 Wheech it stends a rule no cheeldren
 Brutt lest wick de stuck a Baby
 From de name from Hiawatta
 Wott'll be I hesk a henswerl!"
 Opp it jomped de skuw Nokomis

Spicking witt a woice axcited
 "I would like to make a notion
 What I should adapt de baby,"
 Gave de Chiff a hexclamation

"Ho K, is by me agribble."
 So it grew opp Hiawatta
 Went itch day to keendergotten
 Loined from all de boids a lengwidge
 From de boids witt bists a lengwidge
 All de critchures from de forest
 He should be on spicking toims witt

Gave a hoot de howl "Goot Monnink"
 Honked a honk de gooze "Hollo Keed"
 Gave a scritch de higgie "Yoo Hoo"
 Quecked a queck de dock "How guzzit?"
 Gave a bozz de bizz "Hozz beezness?"
 By de squoilles he made inquirriz
 How'll gonna be de weenter
 Gave de squoilles a henswer proutly,
 "Hall de signs witt hindications
 Pointing to a beczy sizzon,
 Reech witt prosperous a hera,
 Witt a houtlook hoptimecstic.
 In de trizz we got dipositts
 Wot it feegures opp a tuttle
 Feefty-savan tousand hacorns
 Ulso from seex tousand wallnots
 Stends a Kepital witt Soiploss."

In de durr in sommer ivvnings
 Set de leedle Hiawatta
 Watched it geeve de strim a reeple
 From de reeple saw de moon rize
 In de sky it rose de moon opp
 Opstess like a hclewater.
 Denced oppon de moon a shadow,
 Esked a quashtion Hiawatta
 How it got de moon de shedow
 So de grandma gave a henswer,

Wance oppon a time a souse-pot
 From de name from Beeg-Chiff Blind Peeg,
 Came hum trick lock in de monnink
 Fool from jeen—from fire wodder
 Fool from fire wodder cockite
 Witt trec frands from de Spick Izzy

On itch one de heep, a heep flesk
 On itch heep a hempty heep flesk
 Seenging ballots tsentimental

Seng "Switt Edelline" de quottet
To de durr it came de meesus
Witt a rulling peen a beeg one
Witt a tommy-huck a hod one
Came witt a potato mesher
In de hend a coppet-bitter
In de heye a look a med one
Sad de Chiff "Boys mitt de meesus,"
"Hollo, swithott come—hic—kees us."

Witt de rulling peen she keesed him
On de cuccanot she keesed hem
On de binn oppon de buld spot
On de dome she deedn't meesed him.
"Yi yi yi. Is diss a system?"
Gave de Chiff a hexclamation
Gave a leff "ha ha" de wodder
Gave a yell de geng "Rezzbarrys."

By de Boyish Bob he grebbed her,
Hopp into de hair he trew her
On de moon full-fuzz she lended
In a hipp de meesus lended
Making shedows wheech you see dere
Making Cholston jeegs witt shimmiz.
Hm—a dollink Hiawatta
Ate opp all de Hindian Corn Mill.

Nobody Can Beat Freidkin's Meats

PA GROSS, his coat weighted down with newspapers (one actually purchased, the others picked up in the train), slowly threaded his way through the crowds descending the steps of the 167th Street elevated station. Once on the street and headed homeward, he removed the ready-made necktie so insecurely fastened to his collar button. "The neck," he told himself, "should get it a heffa-day vacation, too!"

Behind him was the hot and cramped tailoring establishment with its many employees stitching and basting and pressing and cutting. He was on his way home now, to peace and serenity, and, what was more important, to the freshly cooked luncheon which would be awaiting him.

He looked forward to this Saturday repast with almost unlimited pleasure. His daily eight-course lunches at the B. & J. Roumanian Restaurant were substantial enough, but they lacked zest: they were eaten more out of habit than hunger. But Saturday represented a half-day of freedom—and new and fresh delights prepared by that wonder of cooks, Ma Gross.

As the old man neared "Benj. Freidkin's Delicatessen Store," his lips curled scornfully. "No quick-schmick senwich today," he said to himself, "should stick in neck like a piece lead pipe!" No cold cuts and canned beans resting forlornly on one of Freidkin's cement platters! *Canned* beans, indeed! "Itts should come plain,

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not in cans. It comes fomm gronnd in cans? It gruzz on trizz in cans?"

He hurried past the delicatessen store, ignoring its elaborate window display. Ignored, too, was the freshly lettered sign in the window, the handiwork of Eli Freidkin, the proprietor's precocious son. He had spent hours over the heavily curlicued border, the ornately scrolled lettering, the text—an original composition which proclaimed, in verse, the glory of the elder Freidkin's products. Flanked by tall, deep-brown clubs of bologna, the sign proudly boasted:

You can go East,
You can go West,
Freidkin's meats
The finest and the best.
Once you try him
You'll always buy them.
Freidkin's label
Guarantees your table.
Nobody can beat
Freidkin's meats.

By Eli Freidkin
(Age 14½)

Mr. Gross's mind was a single track, its terminal the dining room of his home and the delicious surprise awaiting him. He puffed his way up the two flights of stairs, hunted impatiently for his keys, unlocked the door, and hurried into his apartment.

"Hello, hello, hello!" he announced. "I'm home awready fomm shop, so fix op quick the mill. Just now I got it an eppitite I could eat op a huss . . . A huss and buggy togeddehl!" he amended as he removed his coat and draped it over a chair.

There was no answer. "Hello," he shouted again, and surveyed the empty room. "Somebody is home? Nu, enswer awready! Is nobody home?" Again there was silence; he began to tour the rooms.

"Say, what kine place is this?" Mr. Gross was now talking to himself petulantly. "A fine femily is here! The wibe, who knows where she is? The dutter, I'll betcha she's gung to a moom-pickcheh show! Is empty the whole house!" he cried. "It pays

awready to come home fomm shop! Better I should stay donn-tonn and play a little pinochle, fife cents a hundritt, so I should lose the whole bunch waitches!"

A scribbled note propped against the Kewpie doll on the dresser suddenly attracted his interest. He picked it up, studied the handwriting for several seconds, and then brandished the paper angrily. The note simply said "Bime mitting."

"Mittings-schmittings alluva sunn!" He paced up and down, like a menagerie lion. "Mine fine sessiety lady, she's all the time gung to *this* committee mitting, *that* committee mitting! Fix op better a couple drops itt, the husbint he's woiking like a huss. No! This she don't bodder with! Comes to the husbint, he can drop dett, God fabbid! But let a sessiety sister hoit by her the little finge, then see how quick she rushes, mine fine sessiety lady!" He yanked his coat from the chair. "Mittings! I'll give her mittings!" And he banged out of the apartment.

Mr. Freidkin was seated at a marble-topped table in his delicatessen, eating a plate of pastrami and eggs, pancake style, when Pa Gross came into the store. Pa Gross paraded before the glass counter, eyeing the carefully arranged mounds of delicacies, the beautiful pyramids of olives, the fanlike pattern of assorted cheeses in their silver jackets. He was in a frenzy of indecision. Whatever he ordered, he knew, would be an anticlimax to the sumptuous home-cooked luncheon he had expected. He massaged his chin, shrugged his shoulders, expelled his breath in a mournful sigh, and resigned himself to a menu of assorted delicatessen.

"Is nobody tending the customers here?" Mr. Gross turned toward the white-jacketed proprietor at the table and beat the glass showcase with his ring.

"What'sa metta?" demanded Benj. Freidkin as he threw his napkin on the table and rose to his feet. "You can't see I'm itting? You can't wait till a persin he's finndished? Is maybe here in sturr a husspitol case? So O.K." His voice had an air of cold finality which indicated he was going to let the matter drop. "You in such a rush, so what you want awready?"

Mr. Gross was so taken aback by the fury of Benj. Freidkin's outburst that he had quite forgotten what it was he wanted. Again he eyed the food in the showcase, uncertain as to what to order.

"Lookit him!" the storekeeper cried. "He was making noises with the ring by me on connter, he was in such a hurry just now. But when it comes to order-giving, is goodbye rush!"

"Gimme fa ten cents some slices tunk," muttered Pa Gross. "No," he corrected himself. "Tunk I had lest wikk." He pointed to a grayish slab before him and said, "Gimme better fa ten cents some nice slices stoigin."

"Ten cents tunk, ten cents stoigin you buy in ten-cents sturrl! Here by me is a delicatessen sturrl!" Benj. Freidkin proudly declared. "Here comes by the pond and the heffa pond."

"O.K." said the intimidated patron. "So I'll take better the chippiest pond fomm roll biff. Is fresh the roll biff?" he asked as an afterthought.

The storekeeper slowly surveyed his customer, his eyes conveying his contempt. "No, is poison mine roll biff! What'sa metta, mine customers' money is no good, I must chase away the whole bunch with bed food? Listen." He placed his hands, palm down, on the counter, leaned forward, and whispered furtively, glancing frequently around to make certain he wasn't being overheard. "I was just now itting a piece pastrami with ecks, and when a boss itts by him the stock, lemme tell you is like a guarentee the stock! Listen," he continued solemnly without drawing breath. "With cotts I gemble, with reffles I gemble, but when it comes to mine stomick, then I stop gembling!"

He speared a chunk of rolled beef, placed it on the electric slicer, carved several slivers, and asked, "Is fa yesself the order?"

Mr. Gross nodded. "Mine missus is bime mitting with the ses-siety ladies, and is notting in the food line in house!"

"Nu, what else you like it? The corn biff I guarantee, too!" Before Pa Gross could reply, the corned beef was speared and sliced.

"A nice sorr pickle, uf cuss—udder maybe you like it better cold slurr? The cold slurr today is like a pickcher—beautyfull!" Benj. Freidkin found a paper container and scooped a quantity of coleslaw into it. "What kine breat you like, rye breat udder pumpernickel?" He squinted his eyes and scrutinized Mr. Gross for several seconds. "To me you look like a rye-breat itter. I'm right?"

Pa Gross wanted neither the corned beef nor the coleslaw. He

was almost certain there was rye bread at home. And yet, for some inexplicable reason, he found himself nodding at every suggestion Mr. Freidkin made.

"And now," the proprietor intoned, "it comes to the drinking. I got a nice bottle Dr. Bronn's Celry Tonic, is very delicious today." He started to reach for a bottle, but Mr. Gross had found his voice.

"Celry tonic I don't like," he protested. "Kill me a hundritt times, still I don't like celry tonic!"

"O.K.," Benj. Freidkin smiled benignly to indicate he was not one to argue with a customer. "So you'll make in the house a nice glass tea with a piece lemon. And now," he said, reaching below for a paper bag, "comes the bookkipping depottment!"

He removed a stub of pencil pinned to his ear, wet it, and began scribbling figures on the surface of the bag. "Furr pieces." He checked the number, and waved the bag open.

"A few drops mustidd you shouldn't fegget," Pa said. "It makes tasty the mustidd."

Benj. Freidkin reached for a jar of mustard.

"The small sice, no?"

"You chonging fa mustidd!" the excited Mr. Gross shrieked. "Every place is free the mustidd in a little piece paper and look, he chonges fa mustidd!"

"Excuse me," Mr. Freidkin's voice was again cold and incisive. "Is here a delicatessen sturr, is open now fa six yirrs, will be seven yirrs comes July. Souvnirrs I gave out when was opening the sturr. Today is no souvnirrs! Today you want mustidd, you pay!"

"So who needs awready the mustidd?" He quickly paid the sum asked, grabbed the paper bag, and hurried out. The last words he heard were "Souvnirrs fomm mustidd I should give him yet!"

Pa Gross placed his purchases on the dining-room table, tore open the bag, and stared glumly at the food. He was very unhappy over his encounter with Benj. Freidkin. He didn't mind the storekeeper's insults—that was part of any transaction. He didn't mind being maneuvered into making extra purchases—the food would be eaten. But what did distress him was Freidkin's colossal *chutzpah* in charging for mustard.

"A piece meat, sure you chonge," he reflected as he opened the paper bag. "An epple udder a piece fruit is O.K. to chonge. But where he comes to chonge fa a couple drops mustidd?"

Further thoughts on the subject were erased by the entrance of Mrs. Gross. "Hello, mine fine sessiety lady!" shouted Pa before she had time to remove her coat. "Was a fine mitting? Was a good mitting?"

Mrs. Gross was unconscious of the sarcasm which coated her husband's speech. "Was O.K. Was tukking the sessiety sisters—" She suddenly sighted the food on the table and pointed accusingly. "Look what he's itting—cold cotts!"

"Sure is cold cotts!" roared her spouse. "Mrs. Donntonn Sputt, you should worry what I itt! Fa your pott, let the husbint stovv a whole day. Who needs him? Sure, when it comes a couple doll-less fa a dress to buy, or fa the beaudy polleh, then is O.K. the husbint. But when it comes to a nice plate noodle zupp udder some chopt chicken liver, then is goodbye Chollie with the husbint!"

"A millionaire I got alluva sunn!" exclaimed Mrs. Gross as she examined the packages on the table. "Mr. Rockefeller Number Two is here by me a boarder, he's thrung out money in delicatessen! Mine cooking is no good, ha?"

"Your cooking!" scoffed the old man. "Your cooking is donntonn bime mitting with the sessiety ladies!"

"Dope! *Schlemiehl!*" screamed his wife. "You can't go look in icebox? Cold borsht togeddeh with a nice piece sprink chicken is in icebox, and mine Mr. Blint Man it hoits by him the feet, he can't wukk a couple steps to kitchen to go look!"

"In icebox!" The wide-eyed Mr. Gross looked inquiringly at his wife. "Is all the time the its in icebox, ha?"

"What then? By me in pockitbook I should kipp the its? In letter box donnstairs I should kipp the its?" She picked up the food from the delicatessen and wrapped it in the torn paper bag. "So fomm where comes the cold cotts, mine Mr. Wall Strittnick?"

"Is fomm Freidkin's shop," he replied.

"Aha, the expensiblen sturr he's buying awready! With Freidkin is all the time two-three cents more a piece meat. Mine Mr. Millionaire, is by him so big the pay chick he can't wukk a couple blocks extra he should save a couple cents. Wait!" she said

ominously. "I'll give Freidkin his itts—in his big, fet face I'll give him!"

Pa Gross heard the door slam, and hurried to the kitchen. Holding a leg of chicken in one hand and a slice of rye bread in the other, he smacked his lips in contentment. He allowed his thoughts to dwell on his wife, headed for Freidkin's store, and his face was wreathed in smiles. He began to chuckle.

Pa Gross had suddenly stopped feeling sorry for himself. He was now feeling sorry for Benj. Freidkin.

The Oyster

The oyster's a
Confusing suitor;
It's masc., and fem.,
And even neuter.
But whether husband,
Pal, or wife,
It leads a soothing
Sort of life.
I'd like to be
An oyster, say,
In August, June,
July, or May.

From *The Face Is Familiar*, by Ogden Nash; this selection copyright 1931 by The F.R. Publishing Corporation. Reprinted by permission of Little, Brown and Company.

Broadway Storekeeper

THE I. & Y. cigar store at Forty-ninth Street and Seventh Avenue is open twenty-four hours a day every day of the year except Yom Kippur. During daylight hours it performs the same function as any other cigar store on a fairly busy corner. People coming up from the B. M. T. station or going down into it often buy cigarettes at the I. & Y. The essential character of the place is not apparent until nightfall, when it becomes the neighborhood's nearest approach to a country store. After dark the I. & Y. expands into a forum of public opinion and an arena of practical jokes. Permanent chairman of the debates is the proprietor, Izzy Yereshevsky.

Izzy has to keep his store open all night because one of the main props of his business is selling cigarettes to nearly every night club in town. The hat-check concessionaires, whose stakes in the resorts also entitle them to sell cigarettes at twenty-five cents a pack, never seem able to estimate their needs in advance. Izzy gets emergency telephone calls at all hours for cartons of cigarettes; his nephew, Little Izzy, is on the go making deliveries from dark to dawn. In addition, Izzy supplies those long-legged dolls and beribboned Teddy bears which cigarette girls hawk between the tables in night clubs. Izzy stays open because of the night-club trade and he gets the night-club trade because he stays open.

This stuffed-animal sideline of Izzy's is likely to puzzle the

From *Back Where I Came From*, by A. J. Liebling; copyright 1938 by the author. Reprinted by permission of Citadel Press.

casual visitor to his cigar store—a fairly deep but narrow shop, about twelve feet by thirty. In the show window on Seventh Avenue sit three Cubans making cigars by hand. Clustered around the Cuban's feet in the window, are ranks of Teddy bears and dolls, some pert, some droopy, and all well cured in the aroma of tobacco leaves.

Izzy Yereshevsky is a Jewish peasant. Because he is essentially a countryman, his store has acquired a communal, bucolic atmosphere. Izzy performs all sorts of community services that pay him nothing. "On Broadway," Izzy sometimes says, "you got to be werry good, werry sweet to everybody. And even then they stick you in the back." Remaining an outlander, he feels it necessary to placate the local gods.

Most of his evening guests—their purchases are so infrequent that it would be misleading to call them customers—wear white felt hats and overcoats of a style known to them as English Drape. Short men peer up from between the wide-flung shoulders of these coats as if they had been lowered into the garments on a rope and were now trying to climb out. To Izzy his guests are the people of Broadway. They are the big talkers and, on the rare occasions when they have cash in their pockets, the big spenders. In truth the boys in the white felt hats and the English Drapes do not love money for its own sake. Each fosters a little personal legend of lost affluence; fifty grand dropped on the races in one day, twenty grand blown on a doll in a brief sojourn at Atlantic City. Never to have been in the chips marks one as a punk or a smalltimer. It precludes conversation in big figures. Continuous prosperity, to the boys, however, hints of avarice and is discreditable.

Until 1913 Izzy worked on a tobacco farm in the Ukraine, and when he first came to America he went from the boat to a place in Connecticut he calls East Windsor, Ill. His brother had a job on a tobacco farm there. Izzy worked with him for a year and saved eight hundred dollars. Then he came to New York to learn the trade of cigar-making. Eighteen years ago he opened the I. & Y. two blocks down Seventh Avenue from its present situation.

"I am the 'I.' and I am the 'Y.'," he explains. "Two initials sounds more responsible."

Izzy is famous for the power of his handshake. He pulls his

right hand back level with his shoulder, holds it cocked for a moment, then crashes it against the hand of the person he is greeting. It is as if you have been hit on the palm with a night-stick. "*Hol-lo doc-tor*," Mr. Yereshevsky invariably shouts as he strikes. "Doctor" is his conventional salutation. In Izzy's store, as on the East Indian Island of Buru and among certain Australian aborigines, it is considered bad form to speak a man's real name lest one unwittingly give an enemy power over his future. It is also bad form in addressing a customer who has been away to ask him where he has been. He may have been in Hollywood or he may have been in jail. If he has been in Hollywood he will say so.

Izzy is a man of slightly less than medium height, with broad shoulders and gray, crinkly hair. The color is somewhat deceptive, because Izzy was young enough to be drafted in the World War. A generous and often bluish jowl offsets the effect of Izzy's sensitive nose and mouth. He further masks his inner nature by clenching a large cigar of his own manufacture in the right corner of his jaw. The effort to sustain the cigar twists Izzy's mouth into a hard, jaunty smile hardly in keeping with his timid nature.

Izzy accepts more bad checks than anybody else on Broadway. To make his books balance in the face of such odds, he finds it necessary to work eighteen hours a day. He comes to the I. & Y. at noon and leaves at six o'clock the next morning. He likes to say he has been "thirty-six years on Broadway; eighteen years days, and eighteen years nights." After the midtown night clubs close, concessionaires and headwaiters foregather at the I. & Y. to discuss business conditions, and the cigarette girls drop in to buy their dolls and Teddy bears. Even then, Little Izzy, the delivery boy, is still darting out into the night with orders for late-closing places. On an ordinary night Izzy's nephew hustles up to Harlem or down to Greenwich Village at least half a dozen times.

Izzy does not drink, gamble, or patronize night spots. He works very hard, and most of the men who spend their evenings in his store find this irresistibly amusing. When Izzy announces that another check has bounced, his friends have been known to go out and roll with mirth on the sidewalk in back of the Rivoli

Theatre. To them the calamities of virtue are exquisitely comic. They revel in unmerited catastrophe and sometimes cite Izzy as an example of the uselessness of honest toil.

Izzy shows no resentment. He feels that Broadway people who write bad checks are actuated not by greed but a need for self-expression. They want money to lose on the horse races. Izzy thinks horses are parasitic organisms that live on his human acquaintances. He blanches at the sight of a policeman's mount.

"Win money on a horse race?" he echoes, when asked his opinion of the sport. "How did you think them horses get feeded?"

Every fortnight or so he heads a subscription to bury some horseplayer who has died broke. There are always impromptu collections under way at the I. & Y. for the relief of various indigent nocturnal characters, and the boys subscribe freely. They take an equal pride in giving charity and bilking their creditors.

Izzy has another nephew, Max, who is a graduate of James Monroe High School and a deep student of human nature. A slender, pale young man with a scraggly mustache, he assists Izzy behind the counter. "Everybody who comes in here wants money so he can be a sucker," Max says. "You have to be in the money before you can be a sucker. Only out-of-towners think being a sucker's a disgrace."

One of the favorite amusements among the boys is improvising tall tales to bewilder strangers. A regular habitué of the I. & Y. will shout to another, as if they had just met for the first time, "Say, ain't you the feller that I seen with an animal act at the Hippodrome fifteen years ago, where the camel dived into the tank with you on his back?"

"Sure," the other will come back, calmly, "but it wasn't a camel; it was an elephant I was on."

A friendly stranger, just stopping in to make a purchase, may remark incredulously at this point, "I didn't think the Hippodrome tank was big enough to hold an elephant." Then everybody laughs like mad.

Some of the members of Izzy's cénacle have lovely names. A large, emphatic fellow who usually talks about big real-estate deals, rocking on his heels and shouting, is called Hairynose because of a clump of red hair sprouting from his nostrils. Everybody knows that in workaday life he is a necktie salesman, but

Izzy likes to hear him talk of big land deals. Then there are Skyhigh Charlie and Three-to-Two Charlie. Skyhigh is a ticket speculator with an office on Forty-seventh Street, a large, florid man who buys Izzy's three-for-fifty cigars. The fortunes of the theatrical season may always be gauged by a quick glance at the little finger of Skyhigh's left hand. He wears a ring with a cluster of bulbous diamonds on it, buying larger stones when he makes money, pawning them and wearing smaller ones when things are dull. Three-to-Two Charlie is a betting man with a predilection for short odds which his more reckless intimates find detestable. One elderly lounge with a long goatee and a mane of hair is invariably addressed as "the Doctor." He used to have an office where he grew hair on bald men and is the court of last appeal in all I. & Y. disputes on scientific subjects. At present he is waiting for Izzy to find him a job as a washroom attendant.

The election of Thomas E. Dewey as District Attorney did not please all of the political observers of the I. & Y. "After all, what did he do only sperl a lot of t'ings dat gave people what to eat?" a friend of Izzy's called Monkey the Bum argues. "It's tough enough to make a living now. There's plenty of guys walking the streets today without where to flop, without who to ask for a dime. And in 1926 those same guys didn't have nothing either."

Izzy deprecates such gloom. When the hat-check concessionaires ask him about business conditions he tries to cheer them.

"Me they ask how's business," he says. "So I always tell them something nice. If good, I say'll stay good. If bad, I say it's the bad weather, people are staying home. Or the weather's too good, they're going to the country. Or it's coming Christmas, they're spending money in the stores. Or it's gone Christmas, they spent all their money."

Like all storekeepers of the old tradition, Izzy carries on a number of free public services. Among them he accepts telephone messages for workers in the neighborhood. Most of the messages are from wives, and when Izzy talks to them he indulges a healthy, earthly wit. One whose calls are cleared through the I. & Y. store is a newsdealer called Chopsie who used to be a song-and-dance man in vaudeville. Mrs. Chopsie calls up often.

"Yass, Mrs. Chopsie," Izzy will shout when he answers the telephone. "Sure I seen Chopsie this evening. He was walking down

the street with a blonde weighed maybe three hundred pounds, he wouldn't say where he was going." While he talks to Mrs. Chopsie Izzy rolls his eyes, holds his right hand on his stomach as if in pain, and sometimes weeps in mirth. But he usually gets the message straight—Chopsie is to bring home half a pound of bologna or a copy of True Love Stories.

The I. & Y. is also a free employment agency for hat-check and cigarette girls who meet concessionaires there. On winter nights, too, a few bedraggled ladies without escort come in to warm their feet. Izzy lets them sit on chairs in the back of the store where, since they are always tired and usually slightly drunk, they often go to sleep. Once Izzy tied one to a chair as she slept. It was a great joke when she awoke and started to yell, but afterward Izzy felt badly because he had humiliated the girl. So he presented to her a box of Danny's Special Cigars, which she likes to smoke. Izzy names all his cigars after members of his immediate family. Danny is his five-year-old son. He has two daughters, too, Dora and Della, both in their teens. Izzy long ago combined their names to make a high-class title for a cigar—the DoraDella.

Certain essential facilities of the store are so popular that Izzy has nailed up a permanent sign, "Lavatory out of order." Only strangers are deceived. All through the evening neighborhood people buttonhole Mr. Yereshevsky, asking "Will you O.K. me, Izzy?" Izzy always nods, and the suppliants march toward the rear of the shop in successful defiance of the sign.

Fanciful signs are a feature of the I. & Y. Several steady customers feel gifts for chirography and, in gratitude for being saved from frostbites, they devote hours to lettering testimonials for the walls. A sample is:

My name is Izzy
I'm always busy
Making I. & Y. cigars.

Mrs. Mollie Yereshevsky, Izzy's wife, works in the store during the day. She is a pink-fleshed, country-looking woman, plump and cheerful. They live in the Lincoln Apartments on Fifty-first Street west of Eighth Avenue, a block populated largely by theatre and night-club people. Mollie has a hard time controlling Izzy's generous impulses. When he opened his first store he

readily believed his customers' stories of immense wealth gained quickly through theatrical productions or hat-check concessions in speakeasies. Anyone who bought a box of cigars appeared to Izzy an American millionaire. If the man said the cigars were good, he became on the spot Izzy's friend. When friends asked him to cash checks he always obliged. When the checks bounced, he was sorry because the friends often stayed away as long as two weeks. Reappearing, they would explain that, just before Izzy presented the check at the bank, a wonderful opportunity to buy a nightclub had come their way and to grasp it they had had to draw out all their cash. But to square everything they would offer to sell Izzy the hat-check concession in the club. All he had to do was pay from one to six thousand dollars in advance.

Every time Izzy invested in a concession, he says, one of three things would happen. "Or the nightclub wouldn't open," is the way he puts it, "or it would open and close in a couple weeks, the fellow would keep the concession money, or the club would start to make money they would sell the concession over my head to somebody else. Contracts you didn't have with speakeasies."

Izzy likes to pretend he is less ingenuous now. He adopts a knowing and secretive manner toward strangers, deliberating several seconds before answering even the most innocent question, such as "When did you move here from the Forty-seventh Street store?"

"Six years ago," he will finally whisper.

"Where were you during the War?"

"Fort Totten," Izzy will breathe faintly, after looking around carefully for concealed dictaphones. It sometimes takes as long as three minutes to secure his confidence. When he has given it, he will pull out a drawer in back of the counter to show you his collection of rubber checks.

"About fifty thousand dollars," he boasts, with the pride of a man showing a particularly impressive scar from an appendectomy. "Who shall I collect from, responsible people? I am the most victim on Broadway." He is very proud of it.

Izzy sells wholesale to the night clubs, limiting his profit to two per cent. The cafés make his cigarette business larger in volume than his trade in cigars, but cigars are nearer to Izzy's heart. Because he has room for only three workers at a time, the

cigar makers work in day and night shifts. Luis, the oldest Cuban, sometimes remains in the window making panatelas or perlas until three in the morning. The Cubans sit in a kind of cage, shut off from the rest of the shop by a metal grill. Izzy buys the leaf tobacco and pays the Cubans piecework rates for making the cigars. He keeps the cigars in a large humidor until he makes a sale. When he has an order for a box, Izzy takes it from the humidor, pastes on the revenue stamps, and hands it to the customer.

Izzy believes in cigars. He always recommends them for a hang-over—probably because he has never suffered from one.

From Rags to Rags

EILEEN and I have always been very depressed by those engaging little tales of how captains of finance or editors of magazines or lady presidents of big important department stores made their mark in the world.

You know, the growing lad dashes out into the blistering win-tah breeze to sell a mean newspaper. In about two months the head slugger in the circulation department recognizes true genius in the budding banker; he equips the ambitious boy with a Colt machine gun and from there on in our lion-hearted hero overcomes all obstacles including competitors and winds up complaining about labor unions to the president.

But Eileen and I are obviously never going to get anything from the Horatio Alger boys except sneers. I can't make out, alas, why we never got anywhere climbing up Life's Ladder. Here we are, with old age and retirement just around the corner, and nothing to show for years of blistering effort in the great Game of Life except a few sharp letters from the New York Telephone Company beginning, "Unless we receive by the 12th inst." Clearly we are stuck on the basement rungs of the Ladder noted above, and why?

After all, we started out by earning our first pennies selling newspapers. Or, well, to be a little more accurate, we earned our first motion-picture projector peddling subscriptions to a weekly

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ladies' magazine. The projector had a roll of film showing a man diving into a swimming pool and you could reverse the machine so that the athlete came out of the water and landed back on the springboard. It was quite funny that way.

The magazine was also slightly funny. It kept publishing *The Sheik* over and over again, in weekly installments. The whole family had three years' subscriptions (ninety cents for three years, big special offer) and everybody but Grandma Farrel got awfully sick of mad desert love and heaving passion under the moonlight. Grandma said she sort of missed *The Sheik* when, four years after we had tired of seeing the man come out of the water and go back on the springboard, the circulation department caught up with Grandma and cut her off the mailing list. Once, after the second year, Aunt Kate, who was a great one for getting her money's worth, wrote to ask when they were going to publish something else but patent medicine ads and *The Sheik*. She never got an answer.

After the motion-picture projector incident, Eileen and I abandoned our careers as little business women for some months. Then we evolved a primitive but thriving barter system in milk bottles. We stole the household bottles which we traded in for candy at a delicatessen store around the corner. Eventually we talked the proprietor of the delicatessen store, which was named Bill's Poolroom, into giving us credit, and very shortly we were caught in an evil web of debt. We kept eating more and more Clark Bars, a delicious confection of the period, which in turn forced us to steal more and more milk bottles at an ever increasing rate. The gap between the number of milk bottles we could safely abscond with, and the number of Clark Bars we could and did eat grew larger and larger until at last we owed Bill's Poolroom seventy-four cents. The four cents was for a Clark Bar with its wrapper slightly torn which we were able to purchase at a bargain rate.

The proprietor of Bill's Poolroom, an evil character with floppy ears and little pig eyes, began to badger us. We were old hands at Dickens' novels and we began to fear the approaching shadow of a debtors' prison. We tried to sell the motion-picture projector but the bottom had fallen out of motion-picture projectors, even at sacrifice offers. I disposed of four of my best hair

ribbons and got the bill down to fifty-three cents but then, encouraged by our apparent ability to pay, our crafty creditor let us go on another Clark Bar orgy and finally we were faced with the appalling total debt of eighty-two cents. At this point the mean old proprietor of Bill's Poolroom sent Father an itemized bill.

Father said he didn't know what we were coming to. He said we certainly took after the Farrel side of the family, all of which tribe threw their money around like drunken sailors and ended up in their old age dependent on the bounty of respectable characters like himself who did not squander their cash. He said we would probably never amount to anything like John D. Rockefeller, Andrew Carnegie, and Benjamin Franklin.

He brightened up a little, however, when I got a job working nights in a print shop the summer I was fourteen years old. The job was terribly exciting because I was the center of a big ideological and sociological struggle between the six night linotype operators whom I passionately adored and Mr. Heechum, aged seventy-four, the proofreader.

The linotype operators, who were all big handsome fellows and chewed tobacco expertly, scorned Mr. Heechum because he was a veteran telephone-book proofreader whereas they were graduates of newspaper composing rooms. There is a big difference. Mr. Heechum, a true telephone-book type, was immediately convinced, the first night I set foot in the print shop to take over my combined duties of printer's devil, night elevator operator, and copy-holder, that the six linotype operators were out for no good as far as I was concerned.

This was a very surprising conclusion on Mr. Heechum's part, for I was not only a bare fourteen, still in ankle socks, hair ribbons, and braids, but I was also the homeliest girl in East Cleveland. The linotype operators, who were all happily married, found Mr. Heechum's dark suspicions extremely hilarious. I thought they were flattering, and I used to blush up to my braids when Pete, the handsomest operator, would bellow out from his machine, "Hey! Sweetheart! Light of my life! Pick up my galley pan and give me a nice big kiss!"

Mr. Heechum, who was a deacon in the Methodist Church and had a large nose like Cyrano's which constantly itched, causing

him to scratch it with the lead end of his sharp proofreader's pencil, used to nearly have apoplexy when he heard Pete's fearful phrases. He would come dashing out of his proofroom, his pure white hair standing on end, his large floppy nose covered with pencil marks, waving galley proofs frantically and screeching, "You leave that girl alone, she's only fourteen years old."

Mr. Heechum had a great deal of trouble with me that summer, trying unsuccessfully to bring me up in the way a young girl should go. Pete and the rest of the linotype operators were belligerent Ingersoll atheists, enthusiastic Eugene Debs Socialists, old-time Wobblies, and passionate Union men. Mr. Heechum on the other hand, was not only godly and seventy-four, he was also a life-long Republican and he even used to stand up for Mr. J. P. Morgan during the hot arguments we all had as we sat around eating our 9 P.M. lunch. Pete said that showed you what a telephone-book printer was like.

As the summer wore along, a new crisis came to confront poor Mr. Heechum. Our shop was engaged in setting up in type, every night, the day's minutes of the 1927 Convention of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers. The convention was a very stormy one, for the delegates were in the day-to-day process of finding out their banks were busted, and their Florida island under water. The gentlemen who run the nation's trains were not the type who minced words. I used to sit beside dear old Mr. Heechum in our cubbyhole, reading along aloud, my voice professionally level. "Bro-ther Chair-man," I would chant in the copyholder's Chinese sing-song voice, "colon quote I rise to state that in my o-pin-ion these sons plural dash of dash . . ."

"You need a drink of water," Mr. Heechum used to say hastily, grabbing the copy out of my hands. I would obediently trot off to the water cooler and when I came back Mr. Heechum had safely read us past the infuriated remarks of the Brother from Wabash, Indiana. But five minutes later I would chant, "all cap I got to say is if any low down stink-i-n-g b-a-s . . ."

"Get a drink of water," Mr. Heechum would mutter hoarsely. Some nights I had a regular path worn to the water cooler by eleven o'clock, and it used to take me ages to pull galley proofs because naturally I had to read all the forbidden parts in type.

Those engineers certainly had lush vocabularies when aroused. I got so I could read type like an old hand.

But Mr. Heechum finally gave me up when he discovered I gambled. I lost \$2.25 in bets with Pete and some of the other operators on Jack Dempsey, and Mr. Heechum caught me paying off. Things were never the same between Mr. Heechum and myself. He said a man who gambled was bad enough but a fourteen-year-old girl, still in hair ribbons, who had the evil habit was past saving.

I guess I really was past saving at that, for Pete and his friends had made an indelible impression on my budding mind. Unlike the embryo banker who learns thrift and how to get ahead on his first job, all I ever learned was never to bet on an ex-champion's return bout, and what was wrong with the capitalistic system and God. None of these items ever got me very far in the great business world.

The summer I was sixteen something peculiar happened in Wall Street and the Cleveland job printing business collapsed with hardly time for a sigh. Father who was always a great reader of *The Saturday Evening Post* scoffed around the house for days. He said America was on its way up and nothing could stop it and it was unpatriotic of the printing business to collapse when everybody knew the most fabulous prosperity in the world was slated for the fall of 1929. Father's washing-machine business did not lie down and die until November, so he was extremely porky about my sudden unemployment. He said he had a feeling I was never going to be a success in life, always getting mixed up in queer industries that just sickened and blew up in smoke, poof!, when everybody else was making money hand over fist. He said he doubted if I would ever be able to support him in his old age. He said John D. Rockefeller never fooled around with the printing business, he was in oil up to his ears when but a lad.

John D. Rockefeller was never a waitress, either, but that was my next Port of Call in the great Cruise of Life. Father was always talking about the Cruise of Life, a nautical term he got from the night watchman at his factory. "I'm stuck at a way station on the Cruise of Life," Alex the watchdog used to tell Father. It made Father feel very badly. Here was poor Alex with

eight children and only making \$60 a month. Father mourned over Alex and his Cruise of Life until several years later Alex joined the union and got \$76 a month. After that Father never mentioned the Cruise of Life. It made him mad just to think about that ungrateful Alex, biting the hand that had given him \$60 a month all these years for just punching a few old time clocks and staying up all night. Indeed, adding insult to injury, Alex got to be what he called First Mate in his union and once pounded his fist right on Father's desk. Eileen said she thought Alex was repressed, he probably wanted to be a sailor in his youth. Father said no, he thought Alex just had a peculiar way of talking. Father was always so prosy.

It was Father in fact who made Eileen haul up the anchor and get in on the Life Cruising going on in our family. Father said, after I enlisted in the crew of the Harvey tearoom, that he couldn't see any reason why Eileen shouldn't earn an honest penny too. Eileen wept and said she was only fifteen and she was going to call up the juvenile court and get some justice around here. She said she didn't see why, if Father had two cars, of course the Maxwell was pretty old but it still ran, he had to put his youngest daughter out to work. She said she supposed he'd have her taking in washing next.

That made Father pretty mad. Did John D. Rockefeller charge \$2.50 lipsticks to his Father? Did John D. Rockefeller take five of his little friends to his Father's golf club for lunch and run up a bill that would stagger Mr. J. P. Morgan? How in the name of God could five little high-school girls eat \$17.80 worth of lunch? Wasn't it true that Eileen got the waiter to give her \$10 in cash and put it on the bill so that she could buy a new tire for the Maxwell when she ran into a telephone pole and blew out the old one? Wasn't it?

Eileen said oh, all right, she didn't care, she'd just as soon be a waitress, they'd fire her anyway the first day because she stuttered. Father said that was the wrong attitude. He said just for that she couldn't go to Cape Cod in August with the Hunneckers (Billy Hunnecker, aged eighteen, was a simply gorgeous lad) unless she kept the waitress job right up to the week she was supposed to leave.

So Eileen was pretty chastened when she appeared at the Harvey

employment office. Billy Hunnecker preyed on her mind and, besides, Father said she would have to buy her vacation clothes from the proceeds of her new job. Eileen had her eye on a one-piece white satin bathing suit that was currently priced at \$17.50 in Cleveland's leading department store. Eileen had already tried it on and she said it fitted like a dream.

My sister even at the age of fifteen was East Cleveland's leading beauty and the Harvey people fell all over themselves hiring her. Good old Harvey's was opening a flock of new restaurants, lunch counters, soda fountains, and our tearoom in the recently completed Cleveland Union Station. The lunch rooms were supposed to get the grim, rude, traveling salesman trade, and the ladies who stood behind the curved counters were characters of mature years with plenty of experience in slapping down fresh customers.

The tearoom, on the other hand, was supposed to be Class: lunch eighty-five cents and one buck; tea from fifty cents up. We had a fountain with real fish and dripping vines, and people sat on red leather wall benches to gulp down our fancy food. Harvey's presumed that the fountain and the prices would keep the ordinary railroad-station trade out of our virginal haunts. We were banking on the suburban ladies who commuted in for a bit of shopping, and the management hired Eileen with no questions asked because she looked refined.

Opening day still frightens me in my dreams and Eileen claims it put a psychological mark on her. Eileen and I had never held a tray before in our lives, although Eileen was a great tennis player and a pretty good swan-diver. Since we had lied valiantly about our vast experience to get our jobs in the first place, nobody had seen fit to show us the little tricks professionals use to prevent customers receiving their lunches down their necks instead of on the table.

About 12:10 P.M. that fatal Monday, Eileen staggered out of the kitchen with four chicken patty lunches complete with Chef's Salad. She was even then a tall slender girl and pretty enough to get everybody's momentary attention. But Eileen got more than a passing glance from the cash customers that day. A solemn hush fell over the crowded tearoom as the clientele caught sight of my sister. Paunchy ladies half rose out of their red leather seats, napkins to their mouths to stifle little horrified screams.

For here was my suffering sister holding a huge burdened tray, not safely on the small of her arm, but straight out before her, at shoulder height. Her face was peony red. Her frilly lace cap was over her ear. Her eyes were glazed with horror. She had the gait of a tight-rope walker. After each few steps she paused to stand trembling in her tracks, getting a fresh grip on her four chicken patty lunches. She progressed past crowded tables, and dignified old gentlemen ducked as the tray funeral-marched directly over their bald heads. The crowd began to murmur with horror. Obviously Eileen's slender arms were tiring under their burden. The tray rocked dangerously and a bit of Chef's Salad dripped on the hat of a paralyzed victim.

The hostess raced over, but Eileen shook her head. Apparently she felt she was past help. Her face turned redder and redder. Finally she stood beside the table of the four suburban ladies who had ordered the fatal chicken patties. The eyes of every customer in the tearoom were glued upon my distraught sister. With one accord all hands wondered how she would or could lower the chicken patties from her present height, about where you hold the ball before you throw it up to serve in tennis, down to table, or eating, level.

The chicken patty ladies sat rigid with horror while Eileen rocked the tray high above their heads. Finally Eileen said simply, but in a very loud voice, "HELP."

At this point chicken patty customer Number One gingerly clambered out of her seat, and with great presence of mind, grabbed her plate off the tray and got it down to the table without incident. Her three cronies also rose and safely slid their lunches out of Eileen's trembling hands. Eileen said afterwards she mentally fainted about this point so what happened afterwards, the hostess coming over and apologizing, and the customers being very sweet and poor-girling Eileen hardly mattered.

For some reason, Harvey's didn't fire Eileen after this, although they retired her to the extreme rear of the restaurant where sometimes she got as much as ten cents a day in tips. In spite of her slow "station," Eileen had plenty of other opportunities for mental fainting during her first week at the tearoom.

The second day we were working, the entire female section of the Farrel clan came trotting down to observe our technique

and the quaint sight of Eileen making her own living. Seven aunts and four cousins in all made up the little party and the well-known Farrel sense of humor was at its best, or, to put it more accurately, at its loudest. Aunt Kate, who is the wit of the family, had brought her lunch, consisting as she said at the top of her voice of raw onion sandwiches and baloney, in a little tin work kit which she claimed Grandpa had carried to work the first four years he was married. Before the astounded and horrified eyes of the hostess and the rest of the trade, she settled right down near the fish fountain on the best red leather bench and loudly ordered a glass of beer to top off the onion sandwiches.

The hostess explained about prohibition and suggested in her iciest voice a glass of milk instead. Aunt Kate said since when was milk as good as beer, and after all she needed to keep up her strength, she was the champion floor scrubber in the whole Union Station. All the rest of the aunts kept saying, "Isn't Kate a card?" When the Farrels finally filed out we found they had left Confederate money, of which there was a great oversupply in the family, for tips. Eileen said she fainted mentally twice when Aunt Kate started to crack the shells of the hard-boiled eggs on the sole of her shoe.

The Harvey tearoom opened on Monday. On Wednesday my feet hurt so that nothing else in the world mattered. On Thursday the Chef threatened Eileen with a large meat knife because she scorned his suit. He was a Latin type and very romantic. On Friday the hostess, who was tall and thin and very snobbish because she came from New York, caught Eileen and me wolfing down the special twenty-five-cent chocolate fudge cake. We were supposed to have two-day-old pie for our own lunches but Eileen and I wrangled the cake out of the pastry cook. On Saturday, Eileen finally dropped two orders of creamed mushrooms on toast. In a way it was sort of a relief. Everybody felt the worst was over.

Everybody was wrong. On the following Tuesday Eileen dropped two fruit salads with whipped cream dressing and an order of fudge cake. She was afterwards caught in the kitchen demolishing the cake which she said was very little damaged.

On Friday Billy Hunnecker, the gorgeous lad aged eighteen came into our tearoom for lunch, trailing his mother and Eileen's

friend, his sister Marge. At this point Eileen quit, leaving four customers talking to themselves about their creamed chicken on toast. I was fired five minutes later for sympathizing with her.

We tried to keep it from Father, but he soon sensed something was wrong, especially as the head waiter from the golf club called him up the very next day and asked him, in view of what had occurred the last time, if he wanted his daughter to sign restaurant checks.

Father said we were both destined for the poor house, especially Eileen, unless we married very great wealth which he very much doubted we would ever do. He said it would serve us both right if we did end up chewing the bitter bread of charity. Did Andrew Carnegie walk out on his first job because his beau turned up? Obviously not. On the whole, Father said in conclusion, he did not think we were the sturdy American pioneer type that fought its way from rags to riches.

Time, I regret to say, has proved him right.

Entr'acte

I Full Fathom Five Thy Father Lies

(MR. WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S LYRIC IN MR. PAUL WHITEMAN'S
TEMPO.)

*Mamma's kind o' lonely;
Mamma's kind o' sad.
Mamma, where is papa?
Mamma, where is dad?*

Papa's gone down in his submarine;
Papa's gone after his mermaid queen;
Papa's turned erratic;
Daddy's gone aquatic;
Papa's all wet from base to bean.
Down in the sea-weed with Davy Jones,
Papa is squandering all his bones
On corals and pearls
And bubbles for the diving girls.

Papa is treading the water some;
Oh, what a fish your dad's become!
*I'll tell you on the level,
Your daddy was no devil—*

From *Year in, You're out*, by Samuel Hoffenstein; copyright 1930 by Live-right Publishing Corporation.

There never was a sweller man

Until he did that Kellerman!

Oh, what a change when he comes home!

Won't he look strange with a beaver full of foam,

And his rich alibis

And his fathom five lies!

Watch your mamma tell him what the sea-
nymphs wouldn't tell;

Watch me give him h-e-double—well,

You can bet

He'll get

His funeral knell,

And his ting-a-ling-a-ting-a-ling-a-ding-dong bell!

II You've Got to See Mamma Every Night or You Can't See Mamma at All

(MR. JOHN MILLINGTON SYNGE INTERPRETS AN AMERICAN
THEME.)

It's your mamma you'll be looking at seven nights in the week or not looking at at all, and it's yourself will be crying and complaining at the sight of her, and crying and complaining when you'd not be seeing her at all. And isn't it the hard lot that's fallen on you, what way you must be choosing and you not knowing which way to turn. It's a she-devil she is, I'm thinking, that will not be letting you out one night in the week, and the other mammas so fine to look at it's the very bones in you do be crying for a sight of them.

III Mr. William Wordsworth Covers a Human Interest Story for a Tabloid Newspaper

—A simple skirt,
With cocktails on her breath,
Who feels her oats in every limb—
What should she know of death?

I met a little chorus girl,
She was just eighteen, she said;
Her head was thick as many an earl
Who'd clustered round her bed.

She had a town and country air,
And she was barely clad;
Her eyes, you knew, would look so fair
Unto a Pittsburgh lad.

"Husbands and lovers, little maid,
How many may they be?"
"Seven," she answered, unafraid,
And sized up honest me.

"And where are they, I pray you tell."
She answered, "They are seven,
And two of them are gone to Hell,
And two, I think, to Heaven.

"And two of them will never die,
And there is still another,
And in a swell apartment, I
Dwell near him with my mother."

"You say that two are gone to Hell,
And two in Heaven must be;
Yet you are seven—you know damn well,
Sweet wench, you're stringing me."

Then did the little dame reply,
"I tell you they are seven,
And two whose limit was the sky
I hope have gone to Heaven."

"You're stewed, you're stewed, my little maid,
Your voice sounds queer to me;
If four are planted in the shade
Then they are only three."

"Their graves are green and so were they,"
The little jane replied,
"And often with the pearls I play
Which from the boobs I pried.

"These stockings which I now have on,
These pretty rings you see,
The yellow Packard standing yon,
Kind sir, they gave to me.

"And often when I count each bond
And stock, my heart grows sore,
For then my thoughts go out beyond,
And I am sad for more.

"The first that died was Cleveland Jim;
In bed he raving lay,
And when the booze had finished him,
I married Joe that day.

"And after that came Frisco Fred,
Who made his dough in soap;
The next to go was Harvard Ed,
Whose only love was dope.

"Then Mike was in the gravel laid,
In hooch securely soaked."
"How many are they then, sweet maid,
If four of them are croaked?

"If two of them are gone to Hell,
And two, you think, to Heaven,
How many are they, baby?" Well,
She hiccupped and said seven.

IV Birdie McReynolds

(MR. EDGAR LEE MASTERS TELLS AN OLD, OLD STORY.)

I kept the house on the corner of Linden and Pineapple
Streets,
Down in the district.
And a lively house it was, too,
For a burg like Fork River.
I liked the business,
And that's why I went in it.
Nobody has to do anything he doesn't want to.
How else could I have stuck it out in that hick town?
Imagine me a Fork River housewife,
With a Fork River husband,
The kind that used to come down to my house—
Me, Birdie McReynolds!
Don't make me swallow some dirt.
I never lost my virtue.
Don't think it!
I gave it away for a while,
And then I sold it,
And I had a good time both ways.
I knew everybody,
And everybody liked me.
I kept the judge in his place,
The Mayor, the Sheriff, and the Councilmen,

Or the town couldn't have held them.
They needed somebody like me to tone them down,
The poor, swell-headed, small-town fish,
And it's usually a Birdie McReynolds that does it.
I could read a man's character
By the kind of suspenders he wore;
The old sports went in for white silk ones
With "Fireman" or "Policeman" engraved on the buckles.
It made them feel virile,
The poor saps!
Don't think you'll get a sob-story out of me, Eddie
Masters;
I wasn't that kind of a jezebel.
There ain't any, anyhow.
It's the good women must weep
While the men work.
We like them to work—
They spend more.
Now go away and let me sleep;
That's one thing I never got enough of
In my business,
Or I wouldn't be here.

V Miss Edna St. Vincent Millay Goes Wet

I won't get up tomorrow,
Or go to bed tonight,
Unless I know the red wine
Is standing by the white.

Oh, *I* want the red wine,
And *I* want the white,
Or I'll sleep with my clothes on
Until I look a sight.

I want to live in Pilsen,
I want to live in Cork,

I want to live anywhere
Except in New York.

I want to live in Paris,
In Munich or in Rome,
With a mouth full of bubbles
And a chin full of foam.

Oh, *I* want the red wine,
And *I* want the white,
And *I* want the dark beer
And *I* want the light.

Oh, I want to go where drinking
Isn't held a sin;
I want to crush the juniper
Until it is gin.

I'll sail upon the water
Because it isn't dry—
For *I* want the hard stuff,
The Scotch and the rye.

Oh, somewhere east of Suez,
Our best is like their worst,
And it's only a camel
That won't own a thirst.

Oh, to know that I can get it
Whenever I am dry—
The white wine, the red wine,
The Scotch and the rye!

Oh, I could sit a-keening
The rest of the night,
For brandy and sherry
And dark beer and light!

VI *And Mr. Carl Sandburg, Dry*

Take away the stuff!

Haul it out o' my sight, dump it into the Chicago River, clean the streets with it, let the fat-bellied rich wash down their frogs' legs with it.

I won't traffic with it; it's poison; it drives you crazy; it gives you the D.T.'s and the willies, and I'm not the only one that can prove it—

Not by a damsite; not by a long shot; not by the purple jowls of the brewers and the distillers—God strike 'em dead with their stiff shirts on!

There are ten million wives and widows can prove it; yes, twenty million; thirty million; thirty-seven million, five hundred thousand, in the forty-eight States and some Territories—

And some of the wives have children, and some of the widows have orphans, all legitimate and registered, and entitled to decent treatment, and a fine mess booze has made of them, including those who will grow up to be Presidents of the United States.

Think of them, forty years from now, sitting in the Blue Room of the White House, recalling their rotten childhoods—spoiled and embittered because their fathers came home blind drunk, smelling like a municipal budget, and raised hell and sang drivelling songs, and fell asleep with their clothes on, anywhere from the sink to the ceiling—

What kind of Presidents do you think they'll make?

Go among the Hunkies, the Wops, the Micks, the Californians—the workers and foreigners, who dig the coal and the ditches and furnish the stuff for the Sunday rotogravure supplements—

I except the Kikes, who prefer gambling and women—

And you'll see what John Barleycorn has put over; you'll get your booze-facts straight from the shoulder, so help me God, you will, I'm telling you till I sweat.

And the same holds for native Americans, as hard-drinking a race as ever licked their chops in front of a bar, or in a side-

room, or sat down on a curb-stone to wait for the cop or Xmas.

I hate the stuff.

When you say saloon, I see red buffaloes charging along the plains like a bloody hurricane;

I want to pull the hair out of my chest, and brandish it like a torch in the faces of the anti-prohibitionists, the bootleggers, the scofflaws and the big corporations.

Take it out o' my sight; don't tempt me; I wouldn't taste it for the stockyards—all right, I'll take a swig, but it won't change me, mind; I'm agin it!

Cripes! but I'm agin it!

Stranded on a Davenport

NEWSPAPER shops, large and small, accumulate fantastic personalities and weird behavior patterns. I once knew a Washington newspaperman who suffered from the delusion that Herbert Hoover had bladders on his feet. The first time I met him we were fellow passengers aboard the ill-starred Morra Castle in its maiden run from Newport News to New York. He kept calling me aside, telling me he had an important piece of inside information to give me if I'd promise not to print it. Then he would reconsider and decide to nurse his great secret for a while longer.

At last he came to my stateroom and after looking up and down the corridor to see that he had not been followed he stepped quickly inside, closed and locked the door and announced that he was ready to spill it.

"Herbert Hoover has bladders on his feet," he said, spacing the words for emphasis.

"No!" I exclaimed.

"It's the God's truth," he said.

"How do you know he has bladders on his feet?" I demanded, pretending to be skeptical in the face of such a staggering statement.

"I saw 'em," he said with finality.

He extracted a promise from me that I would neither print this intelligence nor speak of it to a living soul, then he went

From *Low Man on a Totem Pole*, by H. Allen Smith, copyright 1941 by the author. Reprinted by permission of Doubleday and Company, Inc.

his way. Subsequently his friends on the ship told me that he had recurrent spells of this nature and that the delusion was always the same—Herbert Hoover had bladders on his feet—and you could take it or leave it. Beyond this little eccentricity, the man was a very capable Washington correspondent, able, no doubt, to forecast electoral votes with an error margin of only 60 per cent.

Small aberrations, as I said, are commonplace in the profession. A few years ago one of New York's best-known feature writers developed an obsession over turtle eggs. He always carried a small box of the rubbery eggs in his pocket and almost any evening he could be found at his favorite bar solemnly bouncing a turtle egg beside his highball.

Occasionally he would pick up a turtle egg between thumb and forefinger as if it were a priceless pearl, hold it aloft for all to see and cry out:

"Here lies the last hope of the human race!"

He now writes for the radio.

When I worked on the *Denver Post* one of the reporters was a former instructor in Greek at Harvard. Periodically he would walk into the office of the publisher, Frederick G. Bonfils, and demand a ten-dollar pay cut. Bonfils, who was the world's champion pincher of pennies, reacted in a peculiar manner to these requests. A man who would demand a cut in salary, to his way of thinking, was openly flouting one of Nature's first laws. He refused to consider the pay cut.

"Well, then, Mr. Bonfils," the reporter would plead, "if you can't do *that* please give me a five-dollar cut."

Bonfils would not hear of it. Finally the reporter wrote a bitter note to the publisher, declaring that he could no longer hold his head up in public while drawing a greater salary than he was worth, and left town.

One evening I threw a chili party at my home and invited this same ex-professor. He spent the entire evening waltzing with a straight-back chair which he called Xanthippe. Whenever the phonograph stopped he'd go to it and feed it chili.

"The little thing needs sustenance," he would say. He jammed it full of chili, and it was never of any use after that. And when the evening was over I took him to the door. He was a dignified

man, and there was dignity in the arch of his neck as he glanced back into the room for a final affectionate look at Xanthippe. In parting, he said:

"I want you to know that I have had the finest time of my life tonight. And I want to compliment you on your chili. It was better than Childs'."

Because the business is crowded with unpredictable people rational men sometimes get a reputation for madness. Some years ago there was an elderly rewrite man who worked in New York and lived in Jersey City. Two or three times a week he arrived at his office carrying a suitcase. He would always evade any explanation of why he carried the bag back and forth, and a consuming curiosity seized his coworkers. Investigation revealed that the bag, reposing in the locker room, was always empty. Finally one of the reporters was assigned to follow the rewrite man when he left work. The old gent proceeded to West Street, in the neighborhood of the ferry slip he used to get to Jersey, and began scanning the pavement. Soon he found what he was after. He opened his suitcase and brought out an old sugar scoop. Before long he had the bag filled with horse manure. As he resumed his walk toward the ferry slip the baffled reporter stopped him and demanded an explanation. It was simple enough. The old man encouraged a small garden at his home in Jersey, and this was his method of procuring fine fertilizer. He wasn't mad.

Almost everyone employed by the *Huntington Press* was slightly daft. There was Zip Mason, the circulation manager, a man with flashing gold teeth who loved to shock the farmers when they came to the business office to renew their subscriptions. Zip would stride up and down the office, calling on God to strike all women dead in their tracks, and occasionally he would confront the cash register, press a key to open the drawer, spit emphatically into the penny compartment, then slam it shut.

After that he would approach the startled customer, glare malevolently at him and demand:

"How's your Uncle Bill?"

It appears that almost everyone had an Uncle Bill, and those who didn't would usually say, "Oh, you mean my Uncle Ed."

Zip would listen to a long exposition of Uncle Bill's ailments,

throughout which he would cock his head around, studying the narrator from different angles. Then he would say:

"Pardon me for taking the liberty of mentioning it, but you've got the makin's of an ugly old man."

Huntington was a churchly community, fighting proud of its moral elevation. It was the boast of the office-holding deacons that a drop of liquor could not be purchased within the city limits. I know, of my own personal knowledge, that this belief was a hallucination, though the stuff available at two dollars a pint resembled the liquid poured off a keg of nails rather than whisky. It was nose-holding liquor.

I had been employed on the *Press* for about a year. The *Press* was a morning daily, and the *Herald* came out in the afternoon. The publishers quarreled bitterly in their editorial columns, but the fighting was always about Indiana politics and made no sense whatever to me.

The *Press* did not publish on Monday mornings, for that would involve desecrating the Sabbath by working on it—wherefore, the two-story building which housed the paper was closed tight on Sundays.

All employees carried keys to the shop, however, and it was a Sunday night that Rome Brading and I wandered into the deserted news room with no thought in mind of offending the peace and dignity of the people. Brading was my best friend. He attended the public high school, whereas I had abandoned education on completing the eighth grade at St. Mary's. Brading's father owned a barbershop on Jefferson Street, and sometimes we would go there late at night, tilt the chairs back and lie in them, talking about the anatomy of girls and other matters.

On this summer Sunday night Brading sat down at a typewriter and began pecking out a special-delivery letter to his girl (who lived a block and a half from him). Having nothing better to do, I went to work at one of the old side-wheeling Olivers and in about thirty minutes knocked out the bawdy screed that was to send me forth into the world, a disgrace to heaven, home and mother.

I titled it "Stranded on a Davenport," and in length it ran, I should say, close to one thousand words. It was in the first person, written supposedly by a young woman with swivel hips and

animal appetites. It described in luxuriant detail the inception, progress and conclusion of an extremely amorous adventure. It was one of those things—well, as Mart O'Malley told the jury: "I'll venture to say, gentlemen, that there's not a man among you who never has had such a piece of literature in his possession."

I pasted the sheets together and tossed the completed essay over to Brading. He read it and as he read he giggled and guffawed and slapped his lean thighs in the manner of prurient youth. After that we adjourned to Tommy Ellis' restaurant for coffee.

By the next day I had forgotten it. Not so Rome Brading. He took "Stranded on a Davenport" to school Monday morning. Somehow it got into the hands of his girl friend, who was studying typing. She made half a dozen copies and distributed them among her female friends, and they made copies, and by the end of the week the thing had snowballed into a circulation of astounding proportions. All this time I was blithely going from undertaker to feed store to interurban station in pursuit of little news items, oblivious of the terrible storm soon to break.

It was said that every teacher in high school had her personal copy of "Stranded on a Davenport" before two weeks had gone by, but the explosion came when the principal—a male creature—got his hands on it.

Phil Baker, the chief of police, walked into the *Press* office one afternoon and had a talk with Homer Ormsby, the publisher. Then they called me in. Chief Baker had come to Huntington from Defiance, O., where I formerly lived, and this geographical kinship had made us friends from the start. He questioned me about the odious opus, and I told him that I didn't know what he was talking about. He reminded me that he was my pal, that the school authorities were raising merry hell with him, that he had to clear things up, that he *knew* I wrote it. He knew I wrote it because the original copy had been traced to my crony, Rome Brading, because it was written on newspaper copy paper and because it had been written on an Oliver typewriter, an instrument as rare in Indiana as the barracuda.

The chief said he would see to it that nothing painful should happen to me if I'd only be a man and own up. He got sentimental about how we both came from Defiance and how he

was in a tight spot, and at last I said: "All right, I wrote it." He slapped me on the back, told me not to worry and walked out.

I have never trusted a cop from that day to this.

The next day a crippled marshal thumped up the stairs to the second floor of the *Press* building and served a warrant which ordered me to appear three days later before Justice of the Peace Stults to answer a charge of "authorship and circulation of lewd, licentious, obscene and lascivious literature." A half-hour later Rome Brading received a similar invitation, though he was charged only with circulation of the same.

I was as nervous as a pregnant fox in a forest fire until I located Brading. To be truthful, we both were frightened, and two things were obvious: we had to see a lawyer, and we needed some money. I managed to borrow ten dollars against my wages, and we took ourselves into the presence of Martin J. O'Malley. He was a young lawyer, tall and dark and with a commanding presence, and he was something of a courtroom orator. We surrendered our destinies into his hands, and when he had finished laughing he said he'd do it. I handed him the ten dollars and said we'd have to pay him the rest later.

"The rest!" he roared. "There'll be no rest. The ten will cover immediate expenses, and I'll have five hundred dollars' worth of fun out of it."

The Huntington *Herald* seized upon the story of my arrest and went to work with laudable malice. Without putting it in so many words, the evening paper informed the pious citizens of Huntington that this was the caliber of writer hired to produce the drivel they read in the *Press*. Further than that, the *Herald* men handled Huntington news for the Fort Wayne papers, and the "Stranded on a Davenport" case immediately became page-one stuff in both the *Journal-Gazette* and *News-Sentinel*.

As for my own paper, the publisher was surprisingly tolerant and, I think, secretly amused. He lectured me on the sin of indiscretion but he didn't fire me. Instead, he assigned me to write the stories about my own case from day to day.

On the appointed morning Rome Brading and I were in O'Malley's office at eight-thirty, due to appear before Squire Stults at nine. We walked across the public square behind our

counselor to the office building where the squire had his musty tribunal. It was all we could manage to push our way up the rickety stairs and into this habitation of Hoosier justice. The crowd overflowed the gloomy little room, packed the stairway and extended across the sidewalk to the curb. Women of all ages were predominant in the crowd, and I was doubly embarrassed when I saw my mother, who told me at breakfast that morning that she wouldn't believe I had written it—that she knew I was protecting some older person.

Squire Stults was a little old man straight out of a Keystone comedy. He was skinny, bald, and wore white chin whiskers which fanned the air when he talked in precisely the manner of a rube comic. He had a habit of spitting tobacco juice over his right shoulder just before speaking and especially before delivering a vehement "Over-r-ruled!"

Inside the railing, which was verging on collapse beneath the press of the crowd, stood the county prosecutor and his assistant, the crippled marshal, a desk and four cuspidors. The prosecutor, Wilbur Branyan, was tall and hard of hearing, with a pronounced clerical look about him. Cato Hurd, his assistant, was short and broad, with the carriage and pugnacity of a football lineman.

Prosecutor Branyan, intoning with vast solemnity, announced himself ready for trial the moment we had crossed the dirty floor and taken our places before the squire's desk. O'Malley asked that the defendants be tried separately and that Brading go to trial first. They agreed to this procedure without quibble, and the prosecutor, calling the Court's attention to the size of the crowd, suggested that if a larger room could not be found for the trial the building would likely collapse, with great loss of life. Squire Stults said nothing, picked up the telephone, spat fiercely and called someone at the county courthouse across the street in the center of the square. He explained the circumstances and was given permission to use the facilities of the Superior Court for, no doubt, the greatest case of his entire juridical career.

The crowd scurried across the street to the square, and in its wake came the defense, followed by the prosecution, followed by his honor, followed by the hobbling marshal.

The Superior courtroom was jammed, and the audience was 80 per cent female. The jury was selected by the simple democratic

process of sending the marshal out in front of the courthouse to round up the needed men, all of whom loafed around the square awaiting just such a summons to sovereign duty.

It was not a long trial. Several high-school girls squirmed and blushed their way through admissions that they had received copies of the contaminating document. Each admitted that she had read it, volunteering the information that she had no idea of what it meant. Chief Baker told of Brading's confession that he had taken the original copy into the school.

Then Cato Hurd, who always looked as though someone had just jabbed a thumb into his eye, picked up a paper from the counsel table.

"If the Court please," he addressed Squire Stults, "I would now like to read this—this article—this 'Stranded on a Davenport'—to the jury. May I ask that all women be excluded from the courtroom?"

The squire leaned forward, eying Cato Hurd balefully.

"This," he wagged out with his whiskers, "is a public court of law. Them that wants to go can go. Them that wants to stay can stay. Over-r-r-ruled!"

I thought he was going to jerk his head off when he spat.

Not a woman, not a girl stirred from her seat.

Cato Hurd then and there did read "Stranded on a Davenport" to the jury. I had been sitting at the defense table, and, though my name had never once been mentioned in the proceedings, this was too ignominious. My face was flushed as I hurried to a side door. I waited outside in a corridor, bouncing a golf ball against the stone floor, until the case was given into the hands of the courthouse loafers about ten minutes later. I was relieved to learn that the assistant prosecutor read the "lewd, licentious, obscene and lascivious literature" in almost a whisper and that it was impossible to distinguish his words ten feet away. I mean, *my* words.

Mart O'Malley put in no defense, and the oratory was brief. Cato Hurd summed up for the prosecution. He denounced Brading and "the author" as corrupters of maidenhood, sin-sodden wolves bent on sullyng the fair name of Huntington before the world. (I have no hesitancy in saying that at this time I was a virgin. I think the fact stands as a tribute to my

literary skill.) As for O'Malley, he narrowed the issue to a single point—every man has had such a thing in his possession at one time or another.

After about fifteen minutes of weighing that issue the jury concluded that Brading was not guilty. The defendant, on advice of counsel, ran up and shook hands with each of the jurors, who grinned suggestively at him and wisecracked in undertones. With this touching ceremony out of the way, Squire Stults set my trial for a week later.

There was no holding us back that week. The verdict stifled any fears Brading and I may have entertained before. For seven days we were celebrities of a sort. People in the town who had never noticed us before now pointed us out and whispered things. The young blades who had lately taken to corduroy pants, flared at the cuff with red flannel insets, suddenly took an interest in us. Men we had barely known by name came to us pleading for copies of it.

At the *Press* I continued with my work, wrote the story of the Brading trial and typed out with overweening cockiness an account of my own forthcoming ordeal at bar.

Then came the day. I found that I had to go it alone, that Brading's father had ordered him to school under pain of corporal punishment. But I was in high spirits when I reached Mart O'Malley's office.

"Well," I asked, "are we all set?"

"Sure."

"How long do you think it will take?"

"Five minutes," said Mart O'Malley.

"I mean the trial."

He looked at me and grinned.

"Son," he said, "there's not going to be any trial. You're going to plead guilty."

I couldn't speak for a moment. Then I demanded things. I *wanted* to have a trial. I insisted on it. But he shook his head. Brading had merely circulated the thing. I was the *author* of it. I couldn't afford to take a chance with a jury. The plea that had won for Brading wouldn't apply in my case. At last I had to surrender.

We pushed again through the crowd on the sidewalk, up the

stairs and into the little room. The setting was the same, but the proceedings were brief. Squire Stults took my plea, looked in a book, fined me twenty-two dollars and fifty cents, spat, looked at me and added that I could have ninety days in which to pay. It was the first time I ever heard of installment-plan justice.

On the ninetieth day I delivered the money to the squire, who chuckled as he counted the bills. On the ninety-first day the city attorney, a pious gentleman who took an interest in the morals of his neighbors, came around and told me I was going to spend two hours with him each week studying the Scriptures, and since I had discovered that I could no longer get a date with a decent girl in town (no indecent ones were to be had), and because certain news sources, notably the sanctimonious undertakers, no longer regarded me with favor, on the ninety-second day I went forth into the world.

I've been back to Huntington for two brief visits since then. The great "Stranded on a Davenport" case has been forgotten. And so, I found, have I.

How Danny's Friends Threw Themselves to the Aid of a Distressed Lady

SEÑORA TERESINA CORTEZ and her eight children and her ancient mother lived in a pleasant cottage on the edge of the deep gulch that defines the southern frontier of Tortilla Flat. Teresina was a good figure of a mature woman, nearing thirty. Her mother, that ancient, dried, toothless one, relict of a past generation, was nearly fifty. It was long since any one had remembered that her name was Angelica.

During the week work was ready to this vieja's hand, for it was her duty to feed, punish, cajole, dress and bed down seven of the eight children. Teresina was busy with the eighth, and with making certain preparations for the ninth.

On Sunday, however, the vieja, clad in black satin more ancient even than she, hatted in a grim and durable affair of black straw, on which were fastened two true cherries of enameled plaster, threw duty to the wind and went firmly to church, where she sat as motionless as the saints in their niches. Once a month, in the afternoon, she went to confession. It would be interesting to know what sins she confessed, and where she found the time to commit them, for in Teresina's house there were creepers, crawlers, stumblers, shriekers, cat-killers, fallers-out-of-trees; and

From *Tortilla Flat*, by John Steinbeck; copyright 1935 by the author. Reprinted by permission of The Viking Press, Inc.

each one of these charges could be trusted to be ravenous every two hours.

Is it any wonder that the vieja had a remote soul and nerves of steel? Any other kind would have gone screaming out of her body like little skyrockets.

Teresina was a mildly puzzled woman, as far as her mind was concerned. Her body was one of those perfect retorts for the distillation of children. The first baby, conceived when she was fourteen, had been a shock to her; such a shock, that she delivered it in the ball park at night, wrapped it in newspaper and left it for the night watchman to find. This is a secret. Even now Teresina might get into trouble if it were known.

When she was sixteen, Mr. Alfred Cortez married her and gave her his name and the two foundations of her family, Alfredo and Ernie. Mr. Cortez gave her that name gladly. He was only using it temporarily anyway. His name, before he came to Monterey and after he left, was Guglielmo. He went away after Ernie was born. Perhaps he foresaw that being married to Teresina was not going to be a quiet life.

The regularity with which she became a mother always astonished Teresina. It occurred sometimes that she could not remember who the father of the impending baby was; and occasionally she almost grew convinced that no lover was necessary. In the time when she had been under quarantine as a diphtheria carrier she conceived just the same. However, when a question became too complicated for her mind to unravel, she usually laid that problem in the arms of the Mother of Jesus, who, she knew, had more knowledge of, interest in and time for such things than she.

Teresina went often to confession. She was the despair of Father Ramon. Indeed he had seen that while her knees, her hands and her lips did penance for an old sin, her modest and provocative eyes, flashing under drawn lashes, laid the foundations for a new one.

During the time I have been telling this, Teresina's ninth child was born, and for the moment she was unengaged. The vieja received another charge; Alfredo entered his third year in the first grade, Ernie his second, and Panchito went to school for the first time.

At about this time in California it became the stylish thing for

school nurses to visit the classes and to catechize the children on intimate details of their home life. In the first grade, Alfredo was called to the principal's office, for it was thought that he looked thin.

The visiting nurse, trained in child psychology, said kindly, "Freddie, do you get enough to eat?"

"Sure," said Alfredo.

"Well, now. Tell me what you have for breakfast."

"Tortillas and beans," said Alfredo.

The nurse nodded her head dismally to the principal. "What do you have when you go home for lunch?"

"I don't go home."

"Don't you eat at noon?"

"Sure. I bring some beans wrapped up in a tortilla."

Actual alarm showed in the nurse's eyes, but she controlled herself. "At night what do you have to eat?"

"Tortillas and beans."

Her psychology deserted her. "Do you mean to stand there and tell me you eat nothing but tortillas and beans?"

Alfredo was astonished. "Jesus Christ," he said, "what more do you want?"

In due course the school doctor listened to the nurse's horrified report. One day he drove up to Teresina's house to look into the matter. As he walked through the yard the creepers, the crawlers and the stumblers were shrieking one terrible symphony. The doctor stood in the open kitchen door. With his own eyes he saw the vieja go to the stove, dip a great spoon into a kettle and sow the floor with boiled beans. Instantly the noise ceased. Creepers, crawlers and stumblers went to work with silent industry, moving from bean to bean, pausing only to eat them. The vieja went back to her chair for a few moments of peace. Under the bed, under the chairs, under the stove the children crawled with the intentness of little bugs. The doctor stayed two hours, for his scientific interest was piqued. He went away shaking his head.

He shook his head incredulously while he made his report. "I gave them every test I know of," he said, "teeth, skin, blood, skeleton, eyes, co-ordination. Gentlemen, they are living on what constitutes a slow poison, and they have from birth. Gentlemen, I tell you I have never seen healthier children in my life!" His

emotion overcame him. "The little beasts," he cried. "I never saw such teeth in my life. I *never* saw such teeth!"

You will wonder how Teresina procured food for her family. When the bean threshers have passed, you will see, where they have stopped, big piles of bean chaff. If you will spread a blanket on the ground, and, on a windy afternoon, toss the chaff in the air over the blanket, you will understand that the threshers are not infallible. For an afternoon of work you may collect twenty or more pounds of beans.

In the autumn the vieja and those children who could walk went into the fields and winnowed the chaff. The landowners did not mind, for she did no harm. It was a bad year when the vieja did not collect three or four hundred pounds of beans.

When you have four hundred pounds of beans in the house, you need have no fear of starvation. Other things, delicacies such as sugar, tomatoes, peppers, coffee, fish or meat may come sometimes miraculously, through the intercession of the Virgin, sometimes through industry or cleverness; but your beans are there, and you are safe. Beans are a roof over your stomach. Beans are a warm cloak against economic cold.

Only one thing could threaten the lives and happiness of the family of the Señora Teresina Cortez; that was a failure of the bean crop.

When the beans are ripe, the little bushes are pulled and gathered into piles, to dry crisp for the threshers. Then is the time to pray that the rain may hold off. When the little piles of beans lie in lines, yellow against the dark fields, you will see the farmers watching the sky, scowling with dread at every cloud that sails over; for if a rain comes, the bean piles must be turned over to dry again. And if more rain falls before they are dry, they must be turned again. If a third shower falls, mildew and rot set in, and the crop is lost.

When the beans were drying, it was the vieja's custom to burn a candle to the Virgin.

In the year of which I speak, the beans were piled and the candle had been burned. At Teresina's house, the gunny sacks were laid out in readiness.

The threshing machines were oiled and cleaned.

A shower fell.

Extra hands rushed to the fields and turned the sodden hummocks of beans. The vieja burned another candle.

More rain fell.

Then the vieja bought two candles with a little gold piece she had kept for many years. The field hands turned over the beans to the sun again; and then came a downpour of cold streaking rain. Not a bean was harvested in all Monterey County. The soggy lumps were turned under by the plows.

Oh, then distress entered the house of Señora Teresina Cortez. The staff of life was broken; the little roof destroyed. Gone was that eternal verity, beans. At night the children cried with terror at the approaching starvation. They were not told, but they knew. The vieja sat in church, as always, but her lips drew back in a sneer when she looked at the Virgin. "You took my candles," she thought. "Ohee, yes. Greedy you are for candles. Oh, thoughtless one." And sullenly she transferred her allegiance to Santa Clara. She told Santa Clara of the injustice that had been done. She permitted herself a little malicious thought at the Virgin birth. "You know, sometimes Teresina can't remember either," she told Santa Clara viciously.

It has been said that Jesus Maria Corcoran was a great-hearted man. He had also that gift some humanitarians possess of being inevitably drawn toward those spheres where his instinct was needed. How many times had he not come upon young ladies when they needed comforting. Toward any pain or sorrow he was irresistibly drawn. He had not been to Teresina's house for many months. If there is no mystical attraction between pain and humanitarianism, how did it happen that he went there to call on the very day when the last of the old year's beans was put in the pot?

He sat in Teresina's kitchen, gently brushing children off his legs. And he looked at Teresina with polite and pained eyes while she told of the calamity. He watched, fascinated, when she turned the last bean sack inside out to show that not one single bean was left. He nodded sympathetically when she pointed out the children, so soon to be skeletons, so soon to die of starvation.

Then the vieja told bitterly how she had been tricked by the Virgin. But upon this point, Jesus Maria was not sympathetic.

"What do you know, old one?" he said sternly. "Maybe the Blessed Virgin had business some place else."

"But four candles I burned," the vieja insisted shrilly.

Jesus Maria regarded her coldly. "What are four candles to Her?" he said. "I have seen one church where She had hundreds. She is no miser of candles."

But his mind burned with Teresina's trouble. That evening he talked mightily and piteously to the friends at Danny's house. Out of his great heart he drew a compelling oratory, a passionate plea for those little children who had no beans. And so telling was his speech that the fire in his heart ignited the hearts of his friends. They leaped up. Their eyes glowed.

"The children shall not starve," they cried. "It shall be our trust!"

"We live in luxury," Pilon said.

"We shall give of our substance," Danny agreed. "And if they needed a house, they could live here."

"To-morrow we shall start," Pablo exclaimed. "No more laziness! To work! There are things to be done!"

Jesus Maria felt the gratification of a leader with followers.

Theirs was no idle boast. Fish they collected. The vegetable patch of the Hotel Del Monte they raided. It was a glorious game. Theft robbed of the stigma of theft, crime altruistically committed— What is more gratifying?

The Pirate raised the price of kindlings to thirty cents and went to three new restaurants every morning. Big Joe stole Mrs. Palochico's goat over and over again, and each time it went home.

Now food began to accumulate in the house of Teresina. Boxes of lettuce lay on her porch, spoiled mackerel filled the neighborhood with a strong odor. And still the flame of charity burned in the friends.

If you could see the complaint book at the Monterey Police Department, you would notice that during this time there was a minor crime wave in Monterey. The police car hurried from place to place. Here a chicken was taken, there a whole patch of pumpkins. Paladini Company reported the loss of two one-hundred-pound cases of abalone steaks.

Teresina's house was growing crowded. The kitchen was stacked high with food. The back porch overflowed with vege-

tables. Odors like those of a packing house permeated Tortilla Flat. Breathlessly the friends dashed about at their larcenies, and long they talked and planned with Teresina.

At first Teresina was maddened with joy at so much food, and her head was turned by the compliment. After a week of it, she was not so sure. The baby was down with colic, Ernie had some kind of bowel trouble, Alfredo's face was flushed. The creepers and crawlers cried all the time. Teresina was ashamed to tell the friends what she must tell them. It took her several days to get her courage up; and during that time there arrived fifty pounds of celery and a crate of cantaloupes. At last she had to tell them. The neighbors were beginning to look at her with lifted brows.

She asked all of Danny's friends into her kitchen, and then she informed them of the trouble, modestly and carefully, that their feelings might not be hurt.

"Green things and fruit are not good for children," she explained. "Milk is constipating to a baby after it is weaned." She pointed to the flushed and irritable children. See, they were all sick. They were not getting the proper food.

"What is the proper food?" Pilon demanded.

"Beans," she said. "There you have something to trust, something that will not go right through you."

The friends went silently away. They pretended to themselves to be disheartened, but they knew that the first fire of their enthusiasm had been lacking for several days.

At Danny's house they held a conference.

This must not be told in some circles, for the charge might be serious.

Long after midnight, four dark forms who shall be nameless, moved like shadows through the town. Four indistinct shapes crept up on the Western Warehouse Company platform. The watchman said, afterward, that he heard sounds, investigated and saw nothing. He could not say how the thing was done, how a lock was broken and the door forced. Only four men know that the watchman was sound asleep, and they will never tell on him.

A little later the four shadows left the warehouse, and now they were bent under tremendous loads. Pantings and snortings came from the shadows.

At three o'clock in the morning Teresina was awakened by hearing her back door open. "Who is there?" she cried.

There was no answer, but she heard four great thumps that shook the house. She lighted a candle and went to the kitchen in her bare feet. There, against the wall, stood four one-hundred-pound sacks of pink beans.

Teresina rushed in and awakened the vieja. "A miracle!" she cried. "Come look in the kitchen."

The vieja regarded with shame the plump full sacks. "Oh, miserable dirty sinner am I," she moaned. "Oh, Holy Mother, look with pity on an old fool. Every month thou shalt have a candle, as long as I live."

At Danny's house, four friends were lying happily in their blankets. What pillow can one have like a good conscience? They slept well into the afternoon, for their work was done.

And Teresina discovered, by a method she had found to be infallible, that she was going to have a baby. As she poured a quart of the new beans into the kettle, she wondered idly which one of Danny's friends was responsible.

The Cliché Expert Testifies on Love

Q: MR. ARBUTHNOT, as an expert in the use of the cliché, are you prepared to testify here today regarding its application in topics of sex, love, matrimony, and so on?

A: I am.

Q: Very good. Now, Mr. Arbuthnot, what's love?

A: Love is blind.

Q: Good. What does love do?

A: Love makes the world go round.

Q: Whom does a young man fall in love with?

A: With the Only Girl in the World.

Q: Whom does a young woman fall in love with?

A: With the Only Boy in the World.

Q: When do they fall in love?

A: At first sight.

Q: How?

A: Madly.

Q: They are then said to be?

A: Victims of Cupid's darts.

Q: And he?

A: Whispers sweet nothings in her ear.

Q: Who loves a lover?

A: All the world loves a lover.

Q: Describe the Only Girl in the World.

From *Life and Times of Martha Hepplethwaite*, by Frank Sullivan; copyright 1926 by Liveright Publishing Corporation.

A: Her eyes are like stars. Her teeth are like pearls. Her lips are ruby. Her cheek is damask, and her form divine.

Q: Haven't you forgotten something?

A: Eyes, teeth, lips, cheeks, form—no, sir, I don't think so.

Q: Her hair?

A: Oh, certainly. How stupid of me. She has hair like spun gold.

Q: Very good, Mr. Arbuthnot. Now will you describe the Only Man?

A: He is a blond Viking, a he-man, and a square shooter who plays the game. There is something fine about him that rings true, and he has kept himself pure and clean so that when he meets the girl of his choice, the future mother of his children, he can look her in the eye.

Q: How?

A: Without flinching.

Q: Are all the Only Men blond Vikings?

A: Oh, no. Some of them are dark, handsome chaps who have sown their wild oats. This sort of Only Man has a way with a maid, and there is a devil in his eye. But he is not a cad; he would not play fast and loose with an Only Girl's affections. He has a heart of gold. He is a diamond in the rough. He tells the Only Girl frankly about his Past. She understands—and forgives.

Q: And marries him?

A: And marries him.

Q: Why?

A: To reform him.

Q: Does she reform him?

A: Seldom.

Q: Seldom what?

A: Seldom, if ever.

Q: Now, Mr. Arbuthnot, when the Only Man falls in love, madly, with the Only Girl, what does he do?

A: He walks on air.

Q: Yes, I know, but what does he do? I mean, what is it he pops?

A: Oh, excuse me. The question, of course.

Q: Then what do they plight?

A: Their troth.

Q: What happens after that?

A: They get married.

Q: What is marriage?

A: Marriage is a lottery.

Q: Where are marriages made?

A: Marriages are made in heaven.

Q: What does the bride do at the wedding?

A: She blushes.

Q: What does the groom do?

A: Forgets the ring.

Q: After the marriage, what?

A: The honeymoon.

Q: Then what?

A: She has a little secret.

Q: What is it?

A: She is knitting a tiny garment.

Q: What happens after that?

A: Oh, they settle down and raise a family and live happily ever afterward, unless—

Q: Unless what?

A: Unless he is a fool for a pretty face.

Q: And if he is?

A: Then they come to the parting of the ways.

Q: Mr. Arbuthnot, thank you very much.

A: But I'm not through yet, Mr. Untermeyer.

Q: No?

A: Oh, no. There is another side to sex.

Q: There is? What side?

A: The seamy side. There are, you know, men who are wolves in sheep's clothing and there are, alas, lovely women who stoop to folly.

Q: My goodness! Describe these men you speak of, please.

A: They are snakes in the grass who do not place woman upon a pedestal. They are cads who kiss and tell, who trifle with a girl's affections and betray her innocent trust. They are cynics who think that a woman is only a woman, but a good cigar is a smoke. Their mottoes are "Love 'em and leave 'em" and "Catch 'em young, treat 'em rough, tell 'em nothing." These cads speak of "the light that lies in woman's eyes, and lies—and lies—and

lies." In olden days they wore black, curling mustachios, which they twirled, and they invited innocent Gibson girls to midnight suppers, with champagne, at their bachelor apartments, and said, "Little girl, why do you fear me?" Nowadays they have black, patent-leather hair, and roadsters, and they drive up to the curb and say, "Girlie, can I give you a lift?" They are fiends in human form, who would rob a woman of her most priceless possession.

Q: What is that?

A: Her honor.

Q: How do they rob her?

A: By making improper advances.

Q: What does a woman do when a snake in the grass tries to rob her of her honor?

A: She defends her honor.

Q: How?

A: By repulsing his advances and scorning his embraces.

Q: How does she do that?

A: By saying, "Sir, I believe you forget yourself," or "Please take your arm away," or "I'll kindly thank you to remember I'm a lady," or "Let's not spoil it all."

Q: Suppose she doesn't say any of those things?

A: In that case, she takes the first false step.

Q: Where does the first false step take her?

A: Down the primrose path.

Q: What's the primrose path?

A: It's the easiest way.

Q: Where does it lead?

A: To a life of shame.

Q: What is a life of shame?

A: A life of shame is a fate worse than death.

Q: Now, after lovely woman has stooped to folly, what does she do to the gay Lothario who has robbed her of her most priceless possession?

A: She devotes the best years of her life to him.

Q: Then what does he do?

A: He casts her off.

Q: How?

A: Like an old shoe.

Q: Then what does she do?

A: She goes to their love nest, then everything goes black before her, her mind becomes a blank, she pulls a revolver, and gives the fiend in human form something to remember her by.

Q: That is called?

A: Avenging her honor.

Q: What is it no jury will do in such a case?

A: No jury will convict.

Q: Mr. Arbuthnot, your explanation of the correct application of the cliché in these matters has been most instructive, and I know that all of us cliché-users here will know exactly how to respond hereafter when, during a conversation, sex—when sex—when—ah—

A: I think what you want to say is "When sex rears its ugly head," isn't it?

Q: Thank you, Mr. Arbuthnot. Thank you very much.

A: Thank *you*, Mr. Untermyer.

Mr. K*A*P*L*A*N, The Comparative, and the Superlative

FOR two weeks Mr. Parkhill had been delaying the inescapable: Mr. Kaplan, like the other students in the beginners' grade of the American Night Preparatory School for Adults, would have to present a composition for class analysis. All the students had had their turn writing the assignment on the board, a composition of one hundred words, entitled "My Job." Now only Mr. Kaplan's rendition remained.

It would be more accurate to say Mr. K*A*P*L*A*N's rendition of the assignment remained, for even in thinking of that distinguished student, Mr. Parkhill saw the image of his unmistakable signature, in all its red-blue-green glory. The multicolored characters were more than a trademark; they were an assertion of individuality, a symbol of singularity, a proud expression of Mr. Kaplan's Inner Self. To Mr. Parkhill, the signature took on added meaning because it was associated with the man who had said his youthful ambition had been to become "a physician and sergeant," the Titan who had declined the verb "to fail": "fail, failed, bankrupt."

One night, after the two weeks' procrastination, Mr. Parkhill decided to face the worst. "Mr. Kaplan, I think it's your turn to—er—write your composition on the board."

Mr. Kaplan's great, buoyant smile grew more great and more buoyant. "My!" he exclaimed. He rose, looked around at the

From *The Education of H*Y*M*A*N K*A*P*L*A*N*, by Leonard Q. Ross; copyright 1937 by Harcourt, Brace and Company, Inc.

class proudly as if surveying the blessed who were to witness a linguistic *tour de force*, stumbled over Mrs. Moskowitz's feet with a polite "Would you be so kindly?" and took his place at the blackboard. There he rejected several pieces of chalk critically, nodded to Mr. Parkhill—it was a nod of distinct reassurance—and then printed in firm letters:

My Job A Cotter In Dress Faktory

Comp. by

H*Y*

"You need not write your name on the board," interrupted Mr. Parkhill quickly. "Er—to save time . . ."

Mr. Kaplan's face expressed astonishment. "Podden me, Mr. Pockheel. But de name is by me *pot* of mine composition."

"Your name is *part* of the composition?" asked Mr. Parkhill in an anxious tone.

"Yassir!" said Mr. Kaplan with dignity. He printed the rest of H*Y*M*A*N K*A*P*L*A*N for all to see and admire. You could tell it was a disappointment for him not to have colored chalk for this performance. In pale white the elegance of his work was dissipated. The name, indeed, seemed unreal, the letters stark, anemic, almost denuded.

His brow wrinkled and perspiring, Mr. Kaplan wrote the saga of A Cotter In Dress Faktory on the board, with much scratching of the chalk and an undertone of sound. Mr. Kaplan repeated each word to himself softly, as if trying to give to its spelling some of the flavor and originality of his pronunciation. The smile on the face of Mr. Kaplan had taken on something beatific and imperishable: it was his first experience at the blackboard; it was his moment of glory. He seemed to be writing more slowly than necessary as if to prolong the ecstasy of his Hour. When he had finished he said "Hau Kay" with distinct regret in his voice, and sat down. Mr. Parkhill observed the composition in all its strange beauty:

My Job A Cotter In Dress Faktory

Comp. by

H*Y*M*A*N K*A*P*L*A*N

Shakspeare is saying what fulls man is and I am feeling just the same way when I am thinking about mine job a cotter in Dress Faktory on 38 st. by 7 av. For why should we slafing in dark place by laktric lights and all kinds hot for \$30 or maybe \$36 with overtime, for Boss who is fat and driving in fency automobile? I ask! Because we are the deprassed workers of world. And are being exployted. By Bosses. In mine shop is no difference. Oh how bad is laktric light, oh how is all kinds hot. And when I am telling Foreman should be better conditions he holers, Kaplan you redical ! !

At this point a glazed look came into Mr. Parkhill's eyes, but he read on.

So I keep still and work by bad light and always hot. But someday will the workers making Bosses to work! And then Kaplan will give to them bad laktric and positively no windows for the air should come in! So they can know what it means to slafel! Kaplan will make Foreman a cotter like he is. And give the most bad dezigns to cot out. Justice.

Mine job is cotting Dress dezigns.

T-H-E E-N-D

Mr. Parkhill read the amazing document over again. His eyes, glazed but a moment before, were haunted now. It was true: spelling, diction, sentence structure, punctuation, capitalization, the use of the present perfect for the present—all true.

"Is planty mistakes, I s'pose," suggested Mr. Kaplan modestly.

"Y-yes . . . yes, there are many mistakes."

"Dat's because I'm tryink to give *dip ideas*," said Mr. Kaplan with the sigh of those who storm heaven.

Mr. Parkhill girded his mental loins. "Mr. Kaplan—er—your composition doesn't really meet the assignment. You haven't described your *job*, what you *do*, what your work is."

"Vell, it's not soch a interastink jop," said Mr. Kaplan.

"Your composition is not a simple exposition. It's more of a—well, an *essay* on your *attitude*."

"Oh, finel!" cried Mr. Kaplan with enthusiasm.

"No, no," said Mr. Parkhill hastily. "The assignment was

meant to be a composition. You see, we must begin with simple exercises before we try—er—more philosophical essays.”

Mr. Kaplan nodded with resignation. “So naxt time should be no ideas, like abot Shaksbeer? Shoul be only *fects*?”

“Y-yes. No ideas, only—er—facts.”

You could see by Mr. Kaplan’s martyred smile that his wings, like those of an eagle’s, were being clipped.

“And Mr. Kaplan—er—why do you use ‘Kaplan’ in the body of your composition? Why don’t you say ‘I will make the foreman a cutter’ instead of ‘*Kaplan* will make the foreman a cutter’?”

Mr. Kaplan’s response was instantaneous. “I’m so glad you eskink me dis! Ha! I’m usink ‘Keplen’ in de composition for plain and tsimple rizzon: becawss I didn’t vant de reader should tink I am *prajudiced* against de foreman, so I said it more like abot a strenger: ‘*Keplen* vill make de foreman a cotter!’”

In the face of this subtle passion for objectivity, Mr. Parkhill was silent. He called for corrections. A forest of hands went up. Miss Mitnick pointed out errors in spelling, the use of capital letters, punctuation; Mr. Norman Bloom corrected several more words, rearranged sentences, and said, “Woikers is exploitied with an ‘i,’ not ‘y’ as Kaplan makes”; Miss Caravello changed “fulls” to “fools,” and declared herself uncertain as to the validity of the word “Justice” standing by itself in “da smalla da sentence”; Mr. Sam Pinsky said he was sure Mr. Kaplan meant “*opprassed*” voikers of de voild, not *deprassed*, aldough dey are deprassed *too*,” to which Mr. Kaplan replied, “So ve bote got right, no? Don’ *chenge* ‘deprassed,’ only *add* ‘opprassed.’”

Then Mr. Parkhill went ahead with his own corrections, changing tenses, substituting prepositions, adding the definite article. Through the whole barrage Mr. Kaplan kept shaking his head, murmuring “Mine gootness!” each time a correction was made. But he smiled all the while. He seemed to be proud of the very number of errors he had made; of the labor to which the class was being forced in his service; of the fact that his *ideas*, his creation, could survive so concerted an onslaught. And as the composition took more respectable form, Mr. Kaplan’s smile grew more expansive.

"Now, class," said Mr. Parkhill, "I want to spend a few minutes explaining something about adjectives. Mr. Kaplan uses the phrase—er—'most bad.' That's wrong. There is a word for 'most bad.' It is what we call the superlative form of 'bad.'" Mr. Parkhill explained the use of the positive, comparative, and superlative forms of the adjective. "'Tall, taller, tallest.' 'Rich, richer, richest.' Is that clear? Well then, let us try a few others."

The class took up the game with enthusiasm. Miss Mitnick submitted "dark, darker, darkest"; Mr. Scymzak, "fat, fatter, fattest."

"But there are certain exceptions to this general form," Mr. Parkhill went on. The class, which had long ago learned to respect that gamin, The Exception to the Rule, nodded solemnly. "For instance, we don't say 'good, gooder, goodest,' do we?"

"No, sir!" cried Mr. Kaplan impetuously. "'Good, gooder, goodest?' Ha! It's to leff!"

"We say that X, for example, is good. Y, however is__?" Mr. Parkhill arched an eyebrow interrogatively.

"Batter!" said Mr. Kaplan.

"Right! And Z is__?"

"High-cess!"

Mr. Parkhill's eyebrow dropped. "No," he said sadly.

"Not high-cess?" asked Mr. Kaplan incredulously. For him there was no word more superlative.

"No, Mr. Kaplan, the word is 'best.' And the word 'bad,' of which you tried to use the superlative form . . . It isn't '*bad, badder, baddest.*' It's 'bad' . . . and what's the comparative? Anyone?"

"Worse," volunteered Mr. Bloom.

"Correct! And the superlative? Z is the__?"

"'Worse' also?" asked Mr. Bloom hesitantly. It was evident he had never distinguished the fine difference in sound between the comparative and superlative forms of "bad."

"No, Mr. Bloom. It's not the *same* word, although it—er—sounds a good deal like it. Anyone? Come, come. It isn't hard. X is *bad*, Y is *worse*, and Z is the__?"

An embarrassed silence fell upon the class, which apparently, had been using "worse" for both the comparative and superlative all along. Miss Mitnick blushed and played with her pencil. Mr.

Bloom shrugged, conscious that he had given his all. Mr. Kaplan stared at the board, his mouth open, a desperate concentration in his eye.

"*Bad—worse*. What is the word you use when you mean 'most bad'?"

"Aha!" cried Mr. Kaplan suddenly. When Mr. Kaplan cried "Aha!" it signified that a great light had fallen on him. "I know! De exect void! So easy! *Ach!* I should know dat ven I vas wridink! *Bad—voise—*"

"Yes, Mr. Kaplan!" Mr. Parkhill was definitely excited.

"Rotten!"

Mr. Parkhill's eyes glazed once more, unmistakably. He shook his head dolorously, as if he had suffered a personal hurt. And as he wrote "W-O-R-S-T" on the blackboard there ran through his head, like a sad refrain, this latest manifestation of Mr. Kaplan's peculiar genius: "bad—worse—rotten; bad—worse . . ."

Uncle Casper

UNCLE CASPER comes to town on Saturday. He is running for State Senator. His eyes are two black sparkling slits. His mustache is a tuft of dead bull-grass, neatly pruned, and his nose is the sawed-off root of an oak tree. His hair is two spoiled waves of sickled timothy parted in the middle—the east wind blew a swath west and the west wind blew a swath east. There is a cricket ravine between the swaths.

If you could see Uncle Casper. There are white milkweed stems among the dead-timothy hair. If you could see the long arms and the age-spotted hands like the spots on the body of an aged sassafras. His black suit fits his body like the winter bark on an oak tree. The toes of his black shoes have fought the rocks and stumps on Kenney Ridge. His socks fall over the tops of his shoes to hide the scars.

Here comes Uncle Casper on the courthouse square. His black eyes dance, his arms swing like a willow wand waving in a swift wind of Spring. "What is your name, son," says Uncle Casper, "and are you old enough to vote, my son?"

"Press Freeman is my name, I have had the seven-year 'each' three times. If I hadn't I'd be over twenty-one on Election Day all right."

"Which ticket do you vote, my son?"

"I vote on the side of the Lord."

From *Head o' W-Hollow*, by Jesse Stuart; copyright 1936 by E. P. Dutton and Company, Inc.

"That is the ticket I belong to," says Uncle Casper, "and, my son, I am runnin for State Senator. I aim to give the poor people a chance since I am a poor man. My family has broke me up. Sent a boy to college—borrowed the money—mortgaged my home. Found him on the bank of a river in Michigan a-fishin. Sent another boy out to college and he didn't do no good, took to a pack of cards and a bottle. I went to the eighth grade, son, in the old school and I've teached for fifty-nine years. Now, I'm a broke-up man. Set out of a house and home. Can't get a school anymore since we ain't got school trustees. I used to run my trustees and get my schools. I could a got four or five. Things has changed anymore. Not like they used to be. Vote for me in November and I'll make them like they used to be."

Uncle Casper's eyes blink. His hands talk.

"A vote for me means better roads, better schools, better school-houses, feather beds for men when they get drunk instead of ditches, homes for the widows and the orphans, no totin pistols nor bowie knives. I'll put two pieces of bread in your safe where you ain't got but one. Pensions for the old broke-down men like myself and your Pap, and I'll put the school trustees back—three every destrict. A vote for me means a help to you. Son, I am a poor man and I'll help the poor people."

"I'll be there, Uncle Casper, to vote on the ticket the Lord and me and you is on. I'll be there and I'll finish the third spell of the seven-year 'each' by then."

Uncle Casper goes down the courthouse square. He talks with his hands. He talks to this one. He talks to that one. Men gather around Uncle Casper to hear him talk. "I lived on corn bread and onions to get my education, and wore shirts made out'n coffee-sacks and muslin and calico. My boys has broke me up. I've preached the word of God and teached school for fifty-nine year. Brothers, I ask you in the name of the Lord to help me in November and I'll guarantee you every vote you cast for me will mean two slices of bread in your safe when you ain't got but one, and one slice of bread in your safe where you ain't got any. Two hams of meat in your smoke house where you ain't got but one, and one ham of meat in your smoke house if you ain't got any."

Then Uncle Casper goes down the square and he meets Press

Freeman. Uncle Casper says, "And what might your name be, my son?"

"You just met me awhile ago," says Press, "I am Press Freeman. Don't you remember me? Remember we talked about who was on the Lord's side and who wasn't?"

"Yes, I remember you now, son. We talked about the old times. I just want you to remember me in November. Did I ever tell you the story about the snake?"

"No you ain't never," says Press.

"Set down in this bandstand," says Uncle Casper.

"Okie-dough," says Press.

"I was sittin in the yard," says Uncle Casper, "with my feet propped up on the side of the house when I saw it. I was smokin my pipe and lookin toward my potato patch to see if I couldn't just about see my potatoes grow. When all of a sudden, I saw a big blacksnake's head bobbin up and down out of the ragweed patch beside the potato rows. That snake, bigger than a baby's leg, went tearin right out of that ragweed patch and took down across the potato ridges fast as a horse could run. I think to myself, 'What now!'

"The snake sorty halted in the garden between two rows of cabbage heads. I saw him bob his head up and down. He looked like a scared rabbit. I kept my eye on him. There was a little patch of briars beside the cabbage patch—in the old fence row beside the garden. That black snake, big around as a baby's leg and long as a rail-fence rider, made a headlong dive into that briar patch like a cat divin for a mouse. It acted like a cat that smelled a mouse and jumped to get it. And then I saw what I saw. I stopped smokin my pipe and forgot about my leg bein left lame from that bullet I got on Brush Creek at that Revival Meetin.

"That black snake wropped around that big rattler so quick it would make your head swim. I saw it all right there in that briar patch. That black snake wropped that big rattler up like a love vine wrops a ragweed. Then the black snake started to clampin down with all its strength and bitin the rattler's throat. Then he squeezed. I let them fight. The old rattler was squeezed so tight he couldn't rattle. Think about me a-sittin that close to a rattler and not knowin it!

"That black snake worked hard—squeezin, bitin, beatin with its head. Then it uncoiled a wrop at a time until it got down to the last wrop—then it uncoiled the last wrop and sprung way out in the cabbage patch. It bobbed its head up and looked back. It saw the rattler was still movin. Then it took right back into that briar patch. It wropped that rattler up tighter than ever. It bit it harder than ever. It whipped it with its tail like it was a buggy whip. The old rattler couldn't take the last beatin. It give up the ghost and turned over on its back and died. Its belly was turned up to the sun. The black snake took out of there and run out and bit him off a little chew of a weed. It munched it in its flat jaws like a rabbit munches clover.

"I hopped up on my lame leg and parted the briars with my cane. I pulled that dead rattler and took it in and showed it to Liz, my wife. It had twenty-seven rattlers and nine buttons. W'y Liz wouldn't believe what I told her about that fight and the black snake killin the rattler. I skinned the rattler and made me a belt out of its hide and Liz a pair of garters."

"I'll be dogged," says Press.

II

"Somethin kept catchin our chickens. Every mornin we would go out to the barn and count the hens. There would be one missin. So I looked under the roost and found a lot of loose feathers and part of a old white hen. Chuck Winters said to me: 'W'y Casper, that is one of them little chicken owls doin all this. They can hold more chicken than a fox. I'll show you how to trap him.' So I took Chuck at his word.

"We took a dozen steel traps down to where the white hen was layin on the ground. Her head was eaten off and some of the meat was gouged out from under her wing.

"Chuck said: 'Now dig a little ditch around the hen. Throw the loose dirt away. Set the traps in a circle around the hen. Put feathers over the traps. Drive a stake down through the body of the hen so when the owl pulls he can't move her. And in the mornin we'll have the bird that caught that hen. When a owl eats no more of a hen than this he always comes back for the second mess.' And we set the traps, covered them with feathers

and staked the steeltrap chains to the ground with little wooden pegs. We staked the hen down.

"Behold the next mornin if there wasn't one of them old burned hoot owls bigger 'n a turkey gobbler a-settin right on the hen with his neck feathers all bowed up like a rooster ready to fight. He was caught by one toe. But we had the chicken thief that had caught over thirty hens.

"And I said to Chuck, 'Chuck, what kind of punishment are we goin to give this bird?' Chuck studied for a minute and he said, 'W'y Casper, let's saturate him with coal oil, set his tail feathers on fire and turn him back into the elements.' Chuck has always been quick to think of things like that. So, I went to the kitchen, got the coal-oil can and a match and went back to the owl under the chicken roost. I throwed the coal oil on him. We could not get very close to him. Chuck got broom sage and tied it to the end of a stick and set fire to it. I pulled the peg out of the ground that held the trap and Chuck set the fire to his tail.

"Gentlemen, right up into the elements with that steel trap janglin from his toe—that fire to his tail—he soared a red stream of blaze through the elements. Fire from that owl fell onto my meadow. It was in late March when the wind was blowin steady and everythin was so dry. Fire popped up all over the meadow at once. It looked like the red flames of hell and the wind was a-ragin. That owl went right on through the elements.

"I hollered to Chuck to shoot him with a pistol before he fired the whole country. Chuck put seven hot balls of lead at that owl. But it soared right on through the elements. It went right over Mart Haley's timber. The blaze shot up like flames from hell. Flames lapped right up through the dead saw briars and leaves. 'All my timber is gone,' shouted Chuck—'timber lands jines Haley's timber lands. My rail fences are all gone. That owl will set the world on fire if somebody don't shoot him from the elements or the fire don't consume him.' I tell you, gentlemen, that owl set fire to the whole country. My land was ruined. My timber was burned to death. That fire burnt up one thousand panels of rail fence for me. It ruined my meadows. It ruined my neighbors. We had to get together and have workins and put the fence back. We had to put some barns back and two houses. It ruined the whole country. If I hadn't a had good Baptis neighbors I would

a been sued over that owl and would be a broke-up man today."

"Well I'll be dogged," says Press. "Grandma said to burn owl feathers you'd have bad luck among your chickens for seven years."

"Not so, I ain't had a bit of bad luck since then," says Uncle Casper.

III

"Chuck took a notion to run for Representative of Greenbriar County. Chuck preaches some, you know, and one Sunday afternoon when he was preachin Abraham Fox's funeral he said to the people, 'Did you know, folks, that you was a-lookin square at Greenbriar County's next Representative? If you don't know it, I'll tell you that you are lookin square at him.' And Chuck Haley goes out and tells the people that he is goin to pass a Law that the people will get a bounty for every fox hide they bring in to the County seat town of Greenbriar. He told the people that if they didn't clean out the foxes that they was a-goin to clean out the chickens and there wouldn't be enough yaller-legged pullets left for a Baptis preacher a mess. Well, as you know, Greenbriar County has a lot of Baptis and they elected Chuck, though he was on the wrong Party. They went for their religion before they did their Party. Chuck was elected, but not by the fox hunters. They stuck by their foxes.

"Chuck told me all about goin to Frankfort. He said they let him talk in a little thing that looked like a fryin pan. He said it was over behind the pianer. He told them about his bill on the bounty of fox hides. Some said they fooled old Chuck about talkin over the air—said he talked over a old broke-down telephone without any wires to it. Then he did talk over the air. But he give his speech about foxes. I knowed Chuck was goin to get into it with the fox hunters. When he come back from Frankfort and the news got into the *Greenbriar Gazette* about his big speech over the air on foxes and him actin like that and belongin to the wrong Party too, w'y the fox hunters had done had their meeting and they was a-layin for him. Chuck hired a hack and started home smokin a cigar he'd rolled out'n twist-bud tobacco and plump went a hole through his black Stetson hat. Chuck

whipped the horses fast and got away from that bunch of rocks upon the Winsor place. That is where they waylaid Chuck.

"Some said it was old Tiger MacMeans that waylaid Chuck. Old Tiger is a big fox hunter. One time he run a young fox around one pint and up over another pint and into a dirt hole and he dug it out with a stick. Another time one of his Blue Tick hounds got hung up in a rock cliff and he blasted rock down with dynamite for eight days and hired everybody in the neighborhood to help him get old Queen. And old Tiger got her too. She was so nigh gone she couldn't stand up, but when they found her she had the fox right by the tail. He took Queen home and fed her goat's milk and she got all right. Well, he is the fellow we thought put the bullet through Chuck's Stetson hat.

"Gentlemen, by the eternal God, them fox hunters I guess it was got after the Baptis and we had a regular war in Greenbrier County. Barns filled with toabacco burnt all over Finish Creek and Laurel Creek. Cattle barns was burnt to the ground with all the live stock in them. It was a time. I never heard tell of anythin like it. And out on the hills a body could find Irish taters with rat pizen on them—fried taters and dead hound dogs dead along the ridges. They was dead along the creeks where they had tried to get water when the pizen struck them and their insides went to burnin. Chuck couldn't get to church. People looked for him—men that had had their hound dogs pizenen. The fox hunters waited for him when they tooted their horns for dogs that never come home. Of course, Chuck never put the pizen out. But friends of Chuck's put it out when Chuck's Stetson was plugged from a rock cliff.

"And Tid Redfern picked up a coffee-sack full of pizenen biscuits put out to get the dogs. We don't know who put them out. It might a been the shepherds on the hillsides that had been losin sheep, and when the Baptis and fox hunters got into it they put their noses into it for the time was right for them to get the dogs. They wasn't a hound dog left in that country big enough to run a fox or to teach the young pups how to start a cold trail. They said old Tiger could get down and smell where a fox had been and put the young hounds on a cold trail. They wasn't a barn left on Tiger Creek or Laurel Creek big enough to house a yearlin calf. Bloodhounds were used to track men that done

the burnin, but they used red pepper on their shoe soles and when the bloodhounds sniffed that they didn't sniff anymore. So, no one was caught. And people just cooled down in three or four years themselves.

"Bert Flannery said he never could get over it when his milk cows burned in his barn. His barn doors were left open, but the cows would not come out of their stalls. He said he heard the cows bawl so pitifully that it made him cry. He said he couldn't forget that dreadful night and it would stay with him as long as there was wind in his body. Bert Flannery is a good man. He is a good prayin man and he tends to his own business, but he was just drawn into the fracas like a lot of us innocent men. Fudas Pimbroke said he could never forget seein his old Fleet turned on her back on the ridge road where she had been leadin a fox when the pizen got her down. He said she was stretched there bloated with wind. He said he could never forget the look on that dead hound dog's face.

"When the next seesion of time come around for Chuck to go back to Frankfort, they hauled him to the station one night under a load of fodder. He took the train straight for Frankfort to get his Law about bounty on foxes repealed. And Chuck told them about the dogs pizened and the barns and church houses and homes burnt in Greenbriar County and about the war still ragin there—and they wiped that Law right out. Got rid of it root, leaf, and branch. But that got all the Baptis mad at Chuck. Now they was all mad at him—the Baptis and the fox hunters. He didn't have a side to cling to. So, he went home to stay and one mornin when he was milkin the cow, flop went another bullet through his hat. So he got under another load of fodder and went to Greenbriar. He caught a train for West Virginia. He's never come back to Greenbriar. I was reading the paper where he had been killed for giving a West Virginia hound arsenic. The fox hunter hit him in the head with a coal pick. He wasn't any count for a Representative anyway, for he couldn't read nor write nor cipher. And besides, he didn't belong to the right Party. When a man goes out of the bounds of his Party to elect a man of the wrong Party, then you can take care. Things are a-goin to pop. People in Greenbriar County has kindly come back together again after a time."

"I'll be dogged," says Press, "I'll be right there to vote for you, Uncle Casper, in November." Press spits at the knot hole. He misses. Uncle Casper spits from his wad of homemade taste-bud. "Center as a die," says Uncle Casper, "sign I'll be your next Senator of Kentucky."

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